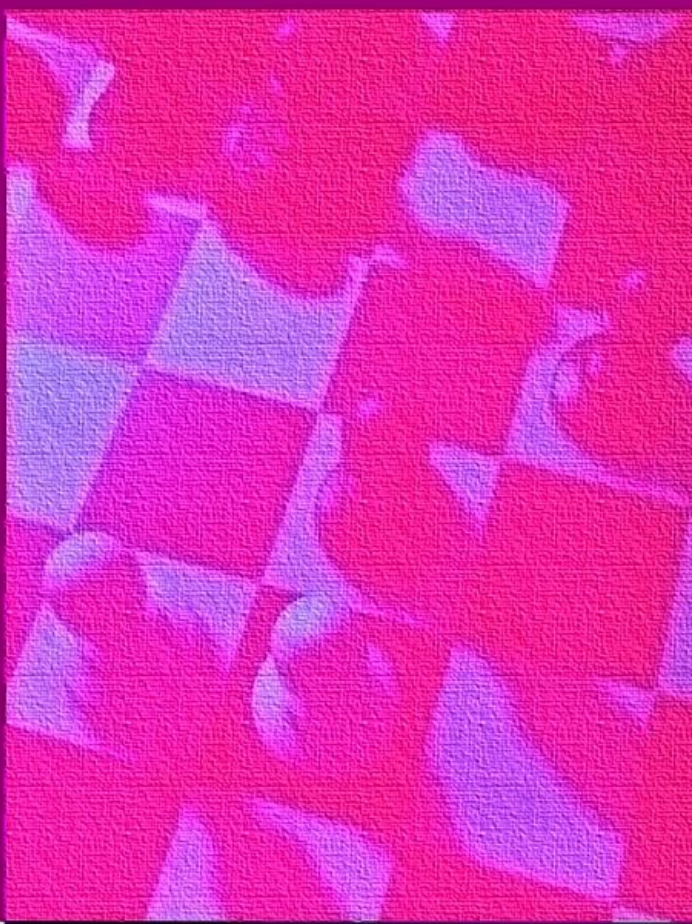
queen's gambit declined



EVERYMAN CHESS

Matthew Sadler

queen's gambit declined

by Matthew Sadler

EVERYMAN CHESS

Published by Everyman Publishers plc, London

First published 2000 by Everyman Publishers plc, formerly Cadogan Books plc, Gloucester Mansions, 140A Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8HD

Copyright © 2000 Matthew Sadler

The right of Matthew Sadler to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 1 85744 256 3

Distributed in North America by The Globe Pequot Press, 6 Business Park Road, P.O. Box 833, Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475-0833.
Telephone 1-800-243 0495 (toll free)

All other sales enquiries should be directed to Everyman Chess, Gloucester Mansions, 140A Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8HD
tel: 0171 539 7600 fax: 0171 379 4060
email: dan@everyman.uk.com
website: www.everyman.uk.com

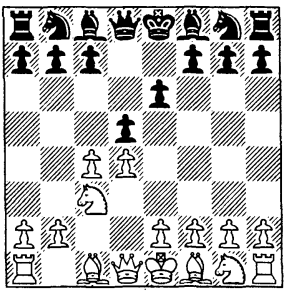
To Steve Giddins, my first coach!

The Everyman Chess Opening Guides were designed and developed by First Rank Publishing.

EVERYMAN CHESS SERIES (formerly Cadogan Chess)
Chief Advisor: Garry Kasparov
Advisory Panel: Andrew Kinsman and Byron Jacobs

Typeset and edited by First Rank Publishing, Brighton.
Production by Book Production Services.
Printed and bound in Great Britain by The Cromwell Press Ltd., Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

CONTENTS



1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3

Bibliography *4*
Introduction *5*

Part One: Main Line Queen's Gambit Declined (3...♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3)

1 Lasker Variation (6...h6 7 ♗h4 ♘e4) *10*
2 Orthodox Variation (6...♘bd7): Old Main Line with 7 ♖c1 c6 *28*
3 Orthodox Variation (6...♘bd7): Other Systems after 7 ♖c1 *40*
4 Orthodox Variation (6...♘bd7): 7 ♕c2 and Other Seventh Move Alternatives for White *50*
5 Tartakower Variation (6...h6 7 ♗h4 b6): Fixed Centre Plans *62*
6 Tartakower Variation (6...h6 7 ♗h4 b6): Development Plans *89*

Part Two: Exchange Variation (3...♘f6 4 cxd5 exd5 and 3...♗e7 4 cxd5 exd5)

7 Exchange Variation: Systems with ♘f3 *109*
8 Exchange Variation: Flexible Systems *134*

Part Three: Other Variations

9 Systems with ♗xf6 *148*
10 5 ♗f4 Variation *161*

QGD 'General Knowledge' *170*
Index of Complete Games *174*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings volume D, 3rd edition (Sahovski Informator, 1997)

Queen's Gambit Declined 5 ♗f4 Colin Crouch (Everyman, 1999)

Periodicals

Informator

New in Chess

British Chess Magazine

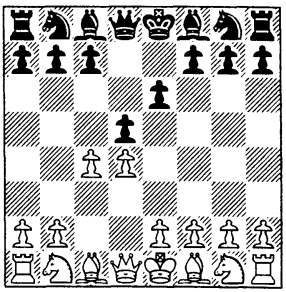
Chess Monthly

Schach

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mark Dvoretsky and Steve Giddins for their help with this book, as well as the manager of the Mall Café, Pentagon Centre, Chatham, for his kindness and the delicious Danish pastries!

INTRODUCTION



1 d4 d5

White's aim was to follow 1 d4 with 2 e4, establishing a double pawn centre. With 1...d5, Black prevents White from achieving this goal.

Where does Black want to put his pieces? When working out a scheme of development, there are always three questions:

1. Can I find an active post for each of my minor pieces?

2. How will I be able to improve my position afterwards?

3. What about my opponent's aims?

Black wishes to develop his kingside and castle his king to safety there. Consequently, it is clear that the moves ...♘g8-f6, ...e7-e6 and ...♗f8-e7 (or -d6/-b4 in some cases) will occur at some stage.

Question 1. Is there a drawback to this method of development?

Answer 1. Although this development is kind to the kingside pieces, it causes some problems for Black's queenside light-squared bishop. The move ...e7-e6 restricts its access to the c8-h3 diagonal, leaving it with only the d7-square, from which it performs no useful function.

Question 2. What is the solution?

Answer 2. Ideally, Black would like to play ...♗c8-f5 or -g4 first and only then ...e7-e6 and ...♗f8-e7. This costs an extra tempo for development, but in this way, all of his pieces would be on active posts. Black could then seek to improve his position.

Question 3. 'Improve his position'. What does that mean?

Answer 3. At the beginning of the game, this does not mean anything dramatic. You put pressure on the opponent's centre, you gain just a little more territory, and complete the mobilisation of your forces.

Question 4. So how does Black do this here?

Answer 4. Black's main idea is to play ...c7-c5, striking at White's d4-pawn and thus gaining a little central and queenside space. He will then develop the rest of his queenside pieces probably starting with ...♘b8-c6.

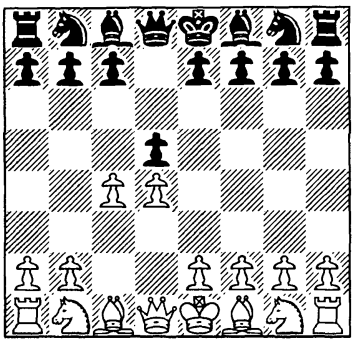
Question 5. And after that?

Answer 5. Now we're going too far! That depends a lot on what White has done, but if your minor pieces are active and you know how to start your search for activity, then there will always be things for you to do in the position.

However, it is White's move and with

2 c4

he throws a spanner into the works.



Question 6. What is White's aim?

Answer 6. White wants to take over the whole centre by removing the only brake on his ambitions: the d5-pawn. Thus he intends 3 cxd5 ♕xd5 4 ♘c3 ♕d8 5 e4 with total domination of the centre.

As a general answer to our questions so far, there are three noticeable trends:

1. Black's 'problem piece' is the light-squared bishop on c8, since the natural development of the black kingside shuts it inside the pawn chain.

2. Black will normally search for counterplay by playing ...c7-c5.

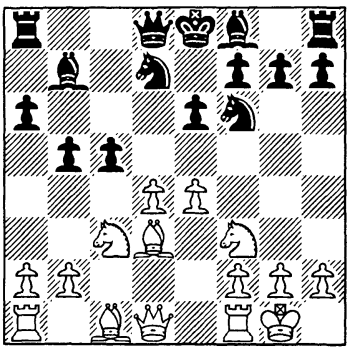
3. White wants to remove the black d5-pawn in order to occupy the centre with pawns on d4 and e4.

Question 7. How should Black respond?

Answer 7. Black's response depends on his interpretation of the relative importance of these three trends. For example, let us consider the Semi-Slav which became the most popular opening against 1 d4 in the mid-1990s: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 e3 ♘bd7 6 ♗d3 dxc4 7 ♗xc4 b5 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 a6 10 e4 c5.

see following diagram

It is clear that Black has concentrated on the first two factors and discarded the third. Black has solved the problem of his light-squared bishop by developing it on the long a8-h1 diagonal (trend 1) and he has already begun his central counterplay with ...c6-c5 (trend 2). However, White has achieved his goal of a double pawn centre (trend 3), as well as a distinct lead in development. This collision of ideas is very typical of modern chess and leads to very sharp play.



Most recently, however, the emphasis of the top players, notably Kramnik (the most prominent Semi-Slav expert of the 1990s) and Kasparov, has switched to the opposite end of the spectrum.

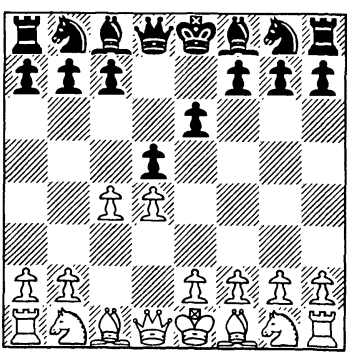
Question 8. You mean, they think that the third point is the most important?

Answer 8. That's right! Black's immediate task is to prevent White from occupying the centre with pawns on e4 and d4.

Question 9. So how does Black do this?

Answer 9. By playing the Queen's Gambit Declined (QGD) move...

2...e6



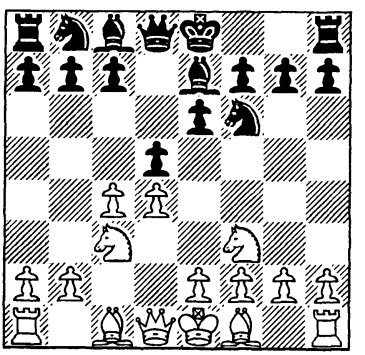
By supporting d5 with the e6-pawn, Black maintains his control over the e4-square as 3 cxd5 can now be met by 3...exd5. Moreover, Black allows the dark-squared bishop to develop and thus begins immediately to prepare the development of his kingside and kingside castling.

Question 10. But you block the light-squared bishop inside the pawn chain don't you?

Answer 10. Right again! In order to prevent White from achieving his plan quickly, Black inevitably has to offer a concession of his own: in this case, the passivity of the light-squared bishop at the start of the game. Black's contention is that this is only a temporary feature that will quickly be rectified in the ensuing middlegame.

Move Order

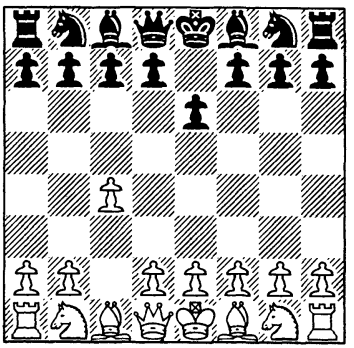
The key position of the Queen's Gambit Declined (QGD) arises after
3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7



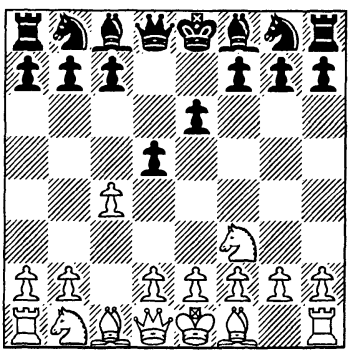
and this will be the main focus of our attention. However there are several move-order questions to be resolved before we can proceed.

The flexibility of the QGD is its greatest asset. Whether White begins with 1 ♘f3, 1 c4 or 1 d4, if at any stage he intends to play both c2-c4 and d2-d4, then he cannot avoid the QGD. This is in contrast to the Queen's Gambit Accepted (QGA) after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4, for example, which White can easily avoid by playing
1 c4

The QGD player, however, simply plays
1...e6!



2 d4 d5 reaching the QGD! Alternatively, if
1 ♘f3 d5 2 c4
then after
2...e6!

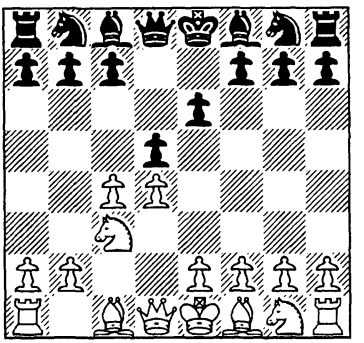


3 d4 ♘f6, the QGD is again reached.

Strangely enough, the biggest move-order debate for Black arises when his opponent plays the straightforward
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3

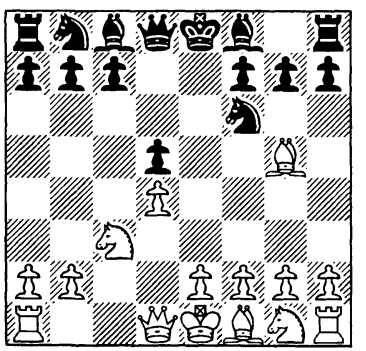
see following diagram

Black now has two choices - 3...♘f6 or 3...♗e7.



Question 11. What is the difference?

Answer 11. 3...♘f6 allows 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5



reaching a variation of the Exchange QGD where White has not yet committed his king's knight to the f3-square. This allows him to play a souped-up version with the knight on e2.

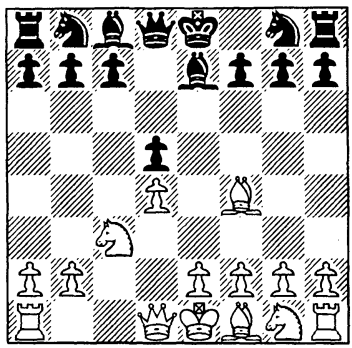
Question 12. Aha, and 3...♗e7?

Answer 12. By reversing the order of his kingside development (...♗f8-e7 before ...♘g8-f6) Black prevents 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5, and therefore encourages White to play an Exchange variation with the bishop on f4 rather than g5: 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗f4.

see following diagram

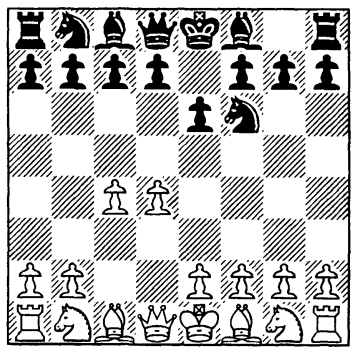
Question 13. So what do strong players do?

Answer 13. Opinion is divided – Kasparov and Karpov have both played 3...♗e7 quite frequently, but Short and Ivanchuk have played 3...♘f6. I would recommend learning 3...♘f6, simply for its flexibility.



Question 14. What do you mean?

Answer 14. Many players aim for the QGD via a cunning move-order: 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6.



Question 15. What's the idea?

Answer 15. The idea is to exploit White's own repertoire: after 3 ♘c3, as well as 3...d5, transposing back into the QGD, Black can play 3...♗b4 leading to the Nimzo-Indian Defence.

Question 16. But I don't want to learn the Nimzo-Indian as well!

Answer 16. You don't have to! The point is that many White players do not allow the Nimzo-Indian and instead play 3 ♘f3, aiming for a Queen's Indian after 3...b6. Then you play simply 3...d5 and...

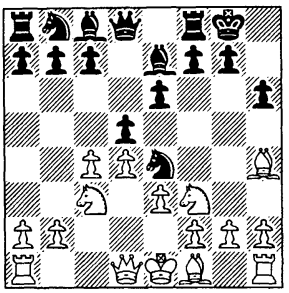
Question 17. I'm into a QGD without

allowing any ♘g1-e2 plans!

Answer 17. Exactly! If they do go 3 ♘c3, then you go 3...d5, but I guarantee that your opponent will have wasted a couple of minutes thinking over your move-order! Of course you cannot play the 3...♗e7 via this move-order which is why I recommend learning 3...♘f6. This gives you the flexibility of two move orders to the QGD: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 and 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6!

The theme for this book has been to highlight the links between the QGD and the other queen's pawn openings. The QGD is the original queen's pawn opening; modern systems such as the Semi-Slav or the QGA have developed by taking features of the QGD and accelerating them, e.g. compromising king safety in order to free the light-squared bishop in double-quick time as we saw in the Semi-Slav example. The aim therefore has been to give some insight into a range of 1 d4 openings – the Nimzo-Indian 4 e3 system, the Chigorin, the Semi-Slav to name but a few – and thus to reveal something about the whole queen's pawn complex as well as the QGD itself.

CHAPTER ONE



Lasker Variation (6...h6 7 ♗h4 ♘e4)

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5

The 5 ♗g5 variation is White's most solid attempt for the advantage. It has two basic ideas:

1. White puts his dark-squared bishop outside the pawn chain in order to allow the development of his kingside with e2-e3 and ♗f1-d3/e2.

2. White interferes with Black's desire to play the freeing move ...c7-c5.

Question 1. How so?

Answer 1. In two ways. Firstly, it attacks a major defender of the d5-pawn – the knight on f6. Secondly, it exerts pressure along the h4-d8 diagonal; for example, were the black bishop to be distracted from e7 after ...c7-c5, d4xc5 ...♗e7xc5, then the black knight on f6 would be unpleasantly pinned to the queen on d8.

5...0-0

Black can also try the similar 5...h6 6 ♗h4 ♘bd7 (6...0-0 7 e3 is simply a transposition to the main line) 7 e3 ♘e4, as in Game 9.

6 e3 h6

The immediate 6...♘e4 is less effective – see Game 8.

7 ♗h4 ♘e4

This move introduces the Lasker variation, named after one of the greatest World Champions of all time, Emmanuel Lasker. It is an extremely important line because the themes within it recur throughout the QGD.

Question 2. This looks like an aggressive move!

Answer 2. In fact, this is one of the quieter lines of the QGD!

Question 3. What is the point of ...♘f6-e4?

Answer 3. Firstly, since Black's position is slightly cramped, he will generally wish to exchange pieces. The fewer pieces he has in a restricted space, the easier his development becomes. Moreover, by solving his own space problems, he also reduces the importance of White's space advantage. Secondly, by exchanging White's dark-squared bishop and his queen's knight, Black removes the pieces that were pressuring his centre (the knight directly attacking the d5-pawn, and the bishop indirectly attacking the d5-pawn by threatening to capture the knight on f6). This releases the immediate pressure from his position, allowing Black more flexibility in his development.

Question 4. Sounds like this just equalises for Black!

Answer 4. Not so fast! There are a number of drawbacks to this idea:

1. By moving the knight twice in the

opening, Black gives White an extra tempo for his own development. Moreover, ...♘f6-e4 exchanges the only minor pieces that Black has developed! Consequently, this manoeuvre does not further Black's development in the short-term.

2. With his central pawns on light squares, Black exchanges off his 'good' dark-squared bishop. Consequently, Black may suffer from weak central dark squares.

Question 5. It sounds a bit stupid to swap off your good bishop!

Answer 5. Black feels that these exchanges will make it much easier for him to achieve the freeing break that will liberate his 'bad' bishop. As with 2...e6, when Black shut in his light-squared bishop in order to hold back White's centre, so here Black also has to give something up in order to get closer to his ultimate goal. Black's judgement is that when he achieves his final goal, then this will compensate for any small concessions he has to make.

Question 6. These advantages and disadvantages all sound a little subtle to me!

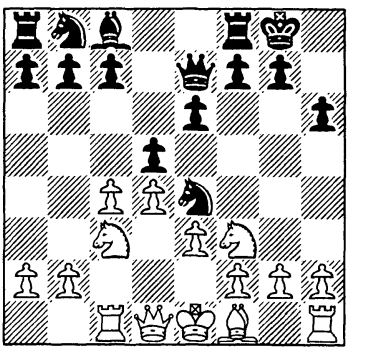
Answer 6. I know what you mean! At the moment, there is no scope for wild kingside attacks or sacrifices. Both sides are quietly accumulating the 'evidence' for their assessment of the position: White looks at his slight space advantage and Black's undeveloped queenside pieces to claim he is better, whereas Black shows what he has neutralised in White's position to claim he is heading for equality. The QGD always takes a little while to get going!

Game 1
Karpov-Yusupov
Dortmund 1997

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 ♘e4 8 ♗xe7

8 ♗g3!? is a relatively unexplored idea. After 8...c5 9 ♗d3 cxd4 10 exd4 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 dxc4 12 ♗xc4 ♘c6 13 ♕d2, Skembris and Miladinovic agreed a draw in Karditsa 1995, but the position is quite unclear. As compensation for the two bishops, White has ideas such as g3-g4-g5 and 0-0-0.

8...♕xe7 9 ♖c1



This is Kramnik's and Karpov's choice and is White's main attempt in this position. (The alternatives 9 cxd5 and 9 ♕c2 are considered in Games 5 and 6, and Game 7 respectively.)

Question 7. Why is this?

Answer 7. Due to the tension between the c4- and d5-pawns, the c-file is likely to become semi-open either by c4xd5 or by ...d5xc4. It is therefore a good positional decision to place a rook on this file. Moreover, with this move White makes it tactically impossible for his opponent to play the desirable freeing break ...c7-c5, as 9...c5 (or 9...♘xc3 10 ♖xc3 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 c5 12 dxc5 ♕xc5 13 ♗xe6!) 10 cxd5! ♘xc3 (10...exd5 11 ♘xd5) 11 ♖xc3 exd5 12 ♖xc5 costs Black a pawn. Finally, the pressure along the c-file interferes with Black's development. Thus the natural 9...♘d7 loses a pawn to 10 cxd5 ♘xc3 11 ♖xc3! exd5 12 ♖xc7.

Question 8. So is Black in trouble now?

Answer 8. Stay calm! Let's work this out! Since Black cannot achieve an immediate ...c7-c5, it is clear that Black needs the support of his undeveloped queenside pieces in order to create any counterplay.

Question 9. But how? You said I can't play 9...♘d7.

Answer 9. Well how about the preliminary 9...c6? This places the c-pawn on a defended square and so prepares ...♘b8-d7.

Question 10. It looks a bit slow!

Answer 10. I understand, but look at White's position. Is he ready to launch a huge offensive? Can he punish me for spending a tempo on a consolidating move?

Question 11. I suppose the answer is no!

Answer 11. Correct! I had a lot of trouble understanding the rhythm of these positions when I first analysed the QGD as a youngster. In all my other lines - Sicilians and King's Indians - there was never any time to spare! If I wasn't going forward all the time, then I was getting pushed back into submission! The QGD is different. From the start, Black has not conceded White any central space and thus has managed to keep White's pieces at 'arm's length' from his position. Consequently, Black can afford a consolidating move or two because White is not 'close' enough to launch a major attack.

There are two main move orders at this point: 9...♘xc3 10 ♖xc3 c6 has been played (transposing to the game after 11 ♗d3) but Kasparov's preferred 9...c6 seems the most natural, as there is little point in moving the knight until one is forced to do so. For example, 10 ♘xe4 dxe4 11 ♘d2 f5 (11...e5!? 12 d5 [12 ♘xe4? exd4 13 ♕xd4 ♖d8! wins a piece] 12...f5!?) 12 c5 (intending ♘d2-c4-e5) 12...♘d7 13 ♘c4 e5 is equal according to Beliavsky.

The final idea is the solid 9...♘f6!?, but White has a steady edge in all variations. For example, 10 ♕c2 (10 ♕b3!? ♖d8 11 ♗e2 dxc4 12 ♕xc4 a6 13 0-0 b5 14 ♕b3 ♗b7 15 a4 b4 16 a5! was a little better for White in Beliavsky-Short, Belgrade 1987) 10...♘bd7 11 cxd5 exd5 12 ♗d3 c6 13 0-0 ♖e8 14 ♕b1, intending b2-b4, as in Portisch-Kholmov, Kecskemet 1962. The move ...h7-h6 is a definite weakness when White plays into c4xd5 lines as we shall see in Game 4.

9...c6 10 ♗d3

Forcing the knight from e4 as 10...f5 11 ♘e5! probes the sensitive g6-square.

10...♘xc3 11 ♖xc3

Question 12. What is Black aiming for now?

Answer 12. It is important to notice that Black has two central breaks: ...c6-c5 and also ...e6-e5. The latter is very kind to the light-squared bishop as it reopens the c8-h3 diagonal. Both these breaks will require the support of the queen's knight from d7. Thus there are three distinct methods of play for Black.

1. The solid ...d5xc4 with ...c6-c5. This is the choice of both Yusupov and Kasparov, and it is featured in this game.

2. The riskier ...d5xc4 with ...e6-e5.

3. The slower ...♘b8-d7 delaying a central commitment and reserving the right to break in the centre without a prior ...d5xc4. This idea is seen in Game 4.

11...dxc4

Question 13. Why does Black give up his occupation of the centre in this way?

Answer 13. The precise reasons in this particular case will be explained later, but in general this is a typical idea. By activating himself with ...c6-c5 or ...e6-e5, Black inevitably weakens his protection of his d5-pawn. Without a prior ...d5xc4, White gets the chance to play c4xd5 and then d4xe5/c5 saddling Black with an isolated queen's pawn (IQP). By abandoning his occupation of d5, Black frees himself from protecting his central pawn which makes his central breaks a lot easier to achieve. Moreover, by playing ...d5xc4, Black removes an obstacle from the a8-h1 diagonal. Thus when Black fianchettoes his light-squared bishop on the long diagonal with ...b7-b6 and ...♗c8-b7 and plays ..c6-c5, the black bishop will stand actively on a clear long diagonal.

Note that Black only captured on c4 once White's bishop had been developed to d3. In comparison to the straightforward 9...♘xc3

10 ♖xc3 dxc4 11 ♗xc4, Black has gained the useful extra move ...c7-c6. This 'fight for the tempo' (making White's bishop take two moves to reach the c4-square) is typical both in the QGD and queen's pawn openings in general.

12 ♗xc4 ♘d7 13 0-0

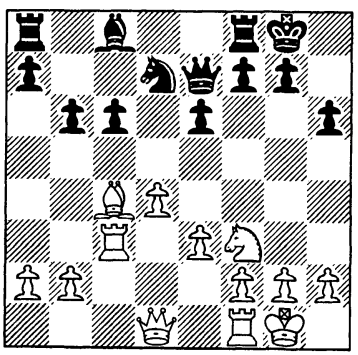
We have in fact transposed to a position from the QGD Orthodox which is usually reached via 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1 c6 8 ♗d3 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♘d5 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 0-0 ♘xc3 12 ♖xc3. The difference is the extra move ...h7-h6 for Black on the kingside.

Question 14. Is this good for Black?

Answer 14. It depends on the set-up that Black chooses. In the game, where White plays his queen and bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal, ...h7-h6 is very useful since White does not gain a tempo by attacking a pawn on h7.

13...b6

13...e5 is the subject of Games 2 and 3.



Black quietly develops 'inside his shell'. The move ...b7-b6 frees b7 for his light-squared bishop; Black then only has to play ...c6-c5 to complete his aims: he will have found an active post for the bishop and he will have begun his central counterplay with ...c6-c5.

Question 15. Wait a minute. Am I going crazy or can White just play 14 e4?

Answer 15. Yes, he can do that.

Question 16. But ... hasn't White just achieved his aims now? You said that White wanted to completely occupy the centre with pawns on d4 and e4?

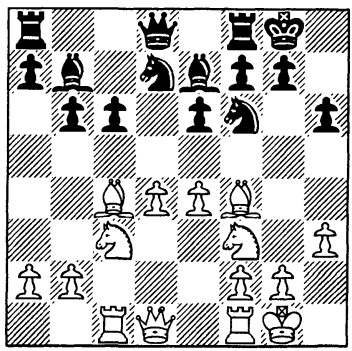
Answer 16. Yes I did but...

Question 17. Well, then Black's opening has failed!

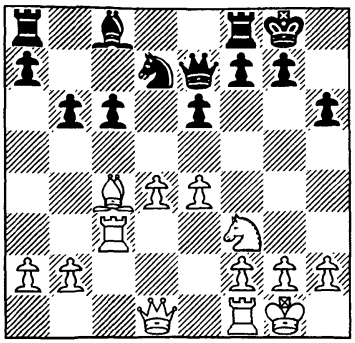
Answer 17. Not so fast! This was White's early opening aim, but we are now in the early middlegame and the situation has changed.

Question 18. How?

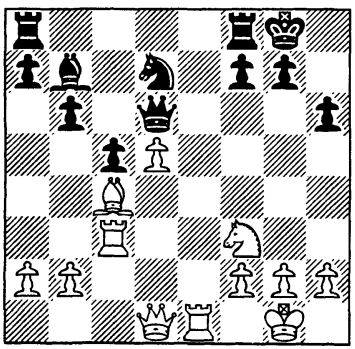
Answer 18. The key point is that Black has exchanged off two of his minor pieces. A big pawn centre has one major strength: it can be used to brush aside the enemy pieces, chasing them from their secure posts, thus gaining territory for your own pieces while ruining the layout of the opponent's pieces. For example, had Black not managed to exchange pieces, we could have reached this type of position:



Here we see the power of the pawn centre. At every step, e4-e5 is a dangerous threat, chasing the knight from its good defensive post on f6, while ...c6-c5 allows d4-d5! ...e6xd5, e4xd5 with the threat of d5-d6. The conjunction of White's central strength with the fact that Black has too many pieces for the space he has available causes Black some problems. Now let's go back to our position after 13...b6 14 e4.



In this case White's pawn centre cannot interfere with Black's pieces as they are well out of range and comfortable within their space. Moreover, after 14...♗b7 15 ♖e1 c5! 16 d5 exd5 17 exd5 ♕d6



what is wrong with Black's position? Because he has exchanged two of his minor pieces, the advance of the d-pawn causes no problems for the harmony of Black's pieces. For example, there is no bishop on e7 facing execution by the d5-d6 push. Black now intends simply ...♘d7-f6 ganging up on the d5-pawn.

14 ♗d3!

Question 19. So what is White's idea then?

Answer 19. This is a crucial moment for White as Black is poised to complete his opening mission with ...♗c8-b7 and ...c6-c5. White has just a couple of moves in which to either realise an aspect of his slight space and development advantage, or to extract a concession from his opponent.

The text preys on Black's temporary weakness along the a8-h1 diagonal (the c6-pawn is undefended and the bishop is not yet mobilised on this diagonal) by preparing to transfer the light-squared bishop to the e4-square to combine against the c6-pawn with the rook on c3.

Now the obvious 14...♗b7 is strongly met by 15 ♗e4! (preventing ...c6-c5) 15...♖fc8 16 ♕c2! followed by 17 ♖fc1 with enormous pressure against c6.

14...c5

Forced.

15 ♗e4!

This disrupts Black's plan of development by preventing ...♗c8-b7. In this way, White maintains a small initiative.

15...♖b8

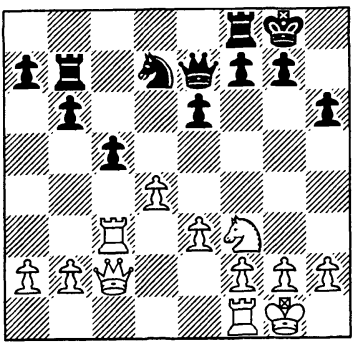
Instead 15...♗a6 16 ♗xa8 ♗xf1 17 ♗c6! ♗a6 (17...♘b8 18 ♕xf1! ♘xc6 19 dxc5 bxc5 20 ♕b5! is awkward for Black) 18 ♕a4! (18 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 prevents d4xc5) 18...♘b8 (forced) 19 dxc5 bxc5 and now 20 h3 (Dolmatov) or 20 ♗b5 leads to a pleasant advantage for White due to the weakness of the c5-pawn.

16 ♕a4

Since the queen has to retreat back to c2 later, it is logical to investigate the old move 16 ♕c2. However, this is less forcing and gives Black some extra possibilities. For example, 16...e5 (Dolmatov mentions 16...♗a6 17 ♖d1 ♘f6!? 18 dxc5 ♘xe4 19 ♕xe4 bxc5 20 b3 with a slight edge for White) is thematic: 17 dxc5 (17 ♗f5!? ♗b7! 18 ♗xd7 exd4 19 exd4 ♕xd7 20 dxc5 bxc5 with counterplay as 21 ♖xc5 ♗xf3 22 gxf3 ♕b7! is fine for Black) 17...♘xc5 18 b4 (not 18 ♗h7+ ♔h8 19 b4 ♘a6!, intending ...g7-g6 to trap the bishop on h7) 18...♘xe4 19 ♕xe4 ♖e8 with ...♗b7 to follow is perfectly okay for Black.

16...♗b7 17 ♗xb7 ♖xb7 18 ♕c2!

This is Kramnik's move.



Question 20. Black has swapped off his bad bishop: isn't he just equal now?

Answer 20. It may appear so at first sight, but in actual fact White still maintains a small, stable plus. Black's practical results at the highest level have been quite poor here. A few draws, an appreciable number of losses and quite a bit of pain for the Black player!

The black light-squared bishop was bad because Black's central pawn chain (c6, d5, e6) was all on light squares. Black's goal was to activate this piece in order to complete his development. In the pursuit of this aim, Black had to loosen his pawn structure: he gave up his pawn occupation of d5, he played his queenside pawns from the light squares c6 and b7 to the dark squares b6 and c5, and finally he managed to get his bishop on the a8-h1 diagonal. At that moment, the bishop ceased to be bad! It became a good bishop due to Black's efforts and that is why White exchanged it, just when Black was about to reap the fruits of his endeavours! Ironically, Black's queenside structure is now slightly weak without this bishop. The queenside light squares on c6, b5 and a6 are targets for both White's queen and his knight.

White's claim for an advantage lies in the combination of Black's weak light squares and the problem Black has with the c-file.

Question 21. What problem? He's got a pawn on c5!

Answer 21. Exactly. The pawn on c5 is attacked by the white pawn on d4. Combined with White's rook on c3 and the queen on c2, this pressure ties the black knight on d7 to the defence of c5-pawn. The obvious course would be to release the tension by ...c5xd4. However, observe the effect after ♘f3xd4. White gains total domination of the c-file while his knight eyes the queenside light squares c6 and b5. These factors cause Black grave discomfort.

Question 22. So what does Black want?

Answer 22. Black's middlegame aim, now that he has fulfilled his opening plan, is to neutralise this c-file pressure. He has several ways to attempt this:

1. The ideal would be to play ...c5xd4 and then block the c-file with ...♘d7-c5. The problem, however, is that this knight can easily be driven away by b2-b4.

2. The advances ...b6-b5 and c5-c4 would release the pressure on the c-pawn and activate Black's queenside pawn mass. However, this is extremely difficult to arrange.

3. So the easiest to achieve his goal is to play ...e6-e5, to swap pawns on d4 and thus to open more files. White's control of the c-file only matters so long as it is the premier open file on the board. If a number of others are opened, e.g. the e-file by ...e5xd4, then it loses its value.

Question 23. I don't understand. I thought that by exchanging pieces, I would just avoid any problems!

Answer 23. The exchange of pieces has made you safe. By swapping off pieces, Black neutralised any of White's aspirations for a quick kingside or central attack. The flip side is that by making himself safe, Black has also robbed himself of his potential to create trouble by stirring up counterplay: he just doesn't have enough pieces for the job. Consequently, he has to continue as he started: neutralising White's initiative.

Question 24. So what was the point of 18 ♕c2?

Answer 24. By removing the queen from a4, White side-steps any attempt from Black to play either ...b6-b5 and ...c5-c4 or ...c5xd4 and ...♘d7-c5 with tempo. Moreover, as Kramnik points out, White actually prevents the freeing break 18...e5 due to 19 ♕e4! White also gains the threat of 19 dxc5 ♘xc5 20 b4!, driving the knight back from its desired post.

18...a5!?

An improvement on 18...♖c8?! 19 ♖c1 ♖bc7 20 b4! e5 (20...c4 21 b5 a6 22 ♖b1 and 20...♘f6 [intending ...♘f6-d5] 21 e4! are clearly better for White according to Kramnik) was the continuation in Kramnik-Kasparov, Las Palmas 1996, and now 21 bxc5! exd4 22 exd4 bxc5 23 ♖c4! ♘b8 24 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 25 dxc5 ♘a6 26 c6 ♘b4 27 ♕a4 was winning for White according to Kramnik.

Question 25. I don't understand this 18...a5!? move.

Answer 25. With this move, Black takes control of b4 in order to prevent White from driving away the black knight with b2-b4 when it comes to c5. The downside is that it further weakens Black's queenside structure.

19 a3!

This typical move renews the possibility of b2-b4 in response to ...c5xd4 and ...♘d7-c5.

19...♖e8!?

Black wishes to use plan 3 above (the ...e6-e5 break) and thus protects his queen in order to negate White's possibility of ♕c2-e4.

20 ♖d1! ♖bb8

Since 20...e5 is met by 21 ♕e4 exd4 22 ♕xb7 dxc3 23 bxc3 ♘e5 24 ♕xb6 ♘xf3+ 25 gxf3 ♕g5+ 26 ♔f1!? with a clear advantage according to Karpov.

21 h3

Removing any back-rank tricks. As Karpov shows, the hasty 21 dxc5 ♘xc5 22 b4 axb4 23 axb4 ♘a6! 24 b5 ♘c5 does not achieve its objective of sidelining the black knight.

21...♖bd8

21...e5 22 dxe5 ♘xe5 23 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 24 ♖cd3 gives White control of the only open file and a slight advantage according to Karpov.

22 ♖cd3 ♖c8

22...cxd4 23 ♖xd4! (23 ♘xd4 ♘e5! is fine for Black) 23...♘c5 24 b4 axb4 25 axb4 ♘a6 26 ♕c4 is good for White according to Karpov due to the poorly-placed black knight on a6.

23 d5! exd5 24 ♖xd5 ♘f6 25 ♖e5! ♕c7

25...♕b7 26 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 27 a4 ♕e4 was a more active defence according to Yusupov.

26 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 27 a4!

Here Karpov claims a clear advantage.

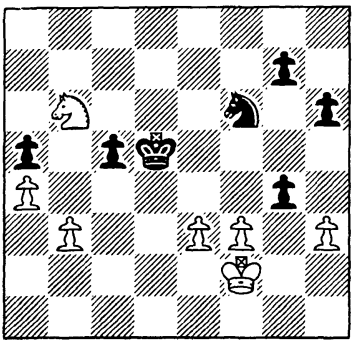
Question 26. Why?

Answer 26. In effect, White is almost a pawn up. Black's queenside pawn majority is powerless to expand as it is tied down by the a4 pawn. Moreover, the queenside structure is weak: the a5- and c5-pawns are held up by a pawn on b6 that is a perfect target for a knight on c4. White's kingside majority has no such impediments and so it is much easier for him to create a passed pawn than for Black.

I understand that I am talking very breezily about something that is incredibly subtle and requires the highest level of technique. Yusupov is one of the best endgame players in the world, but Karpov makes this position look like a forced win! When considering whether to play a variation like this, you have to consider the strength and inclinations of your opponent. An all-out attacking player would not like the white position after move 18 and would be unlikely to cause many problems. However, if you do get the chance to be Black against Karpov, don't try this line!

27...♖d8 28 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 29 ♘e5 ♕d5 30 ♘c4 ♘d7 31 b3 f5 32 ♔f1 ♔f7 33 f3 ♔e7 34 ♔e2 ♕e6 35 ♕c3 ♘f6 36 ♔f2

♔d7 37 g4 ♔c6? 38 ♕e5! ♕xe5 39 ♘xe5+ ♔d5 40 ♘c4 fxg4 41 ♘xb6+!



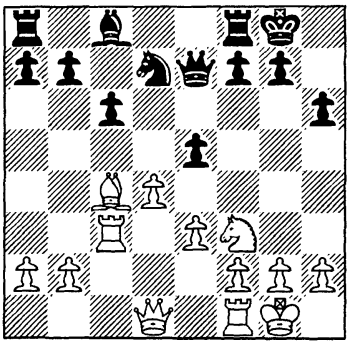
41...♔c6 42 ♘c4 gxf3 43 ♔xf3 ♔d5 44 ♘xa5 g5 45 ♘c4 h5 46 ♘d2 ♔e5 47 e4 ♘e8 48 ♔e3 ♘c7 49 ♘c4+ ♔f6 50 ♔f2 ♘a6 51 ♔g3 ♘b4 52 h4 ♘c6 53 a5! ♘b4 54 ♘d2 ♘c6 55 a6 gxh4+ 56 ♔xh4 ♔e6 57 ♔xh5 ♔d7 58 ♔g6 ♔c7 59 ♘c4 ♔b8 60 ♔f6 ♔a7 61 e5 ♔xa6 62 e6 ♔b5 63 e7 1-0

Question 27. I'm a bit confused. Is this a good or a bad variation?

Answer 27. Karpov wrote the following: 'Of course anyone who chooses Lasker's Defence is hardly in danger of earning the whole point and must be prepared for a prolonged defence in the battle for a half point.' This sums up how the top players feel about facing it: they don't know whether they will win, but they do hope to at least make you suffer! At a lower level, however, where the level of technique is less exalted, this is a useful line to have in your repertoire, particularly against an aggressive all-out player who doesn't like endings!

Game 2
Karpov-Yusupov
London (8th matchgame) 1989

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 ♘e4 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 ♖c1 c6 10 ♗d3 ♘xc3 11 ♖xc3 dxc4 12 ♗xc4 ♘d7 13 0-0 e5



In contrast to 13...b6, 13...e5 strikes immediately at White's centre and reopens the c8-h3 diagonal for his light-squared bishop on c8. However, Black still has a development problem.

Question 28. What do you mean?

Answer 28. To complete his development, Black must involve his light-squared bishop and queen's rook in the game. However, the light-squared bishop is blocked by the knight on d7, which cannot move without leaving the e5-pawn undefended. Consequently, Black must release the central tension before completing his development which is a concession.

Question 29. Why is that?

Answer 29. The longer you can keep the central situation unresolved, the longer you keep the opponent guessing, and so the less time he has to prepare himself for your eventual plan.

14 ♗b3

A typical Karpov move! After releasing the central tension, Black's most natural continuation is ...♘d7-b6 to free the bishop on c8, while gaining a tempo attacking White's bishop on c4. 14 ♗b3 anticipates ...♘d7-b6 and waits for Black to commit himself.

There are three basic central scenarios:

1. Black plays ...e5-e4
2. Black plays ...e5xd4.

3. White captures on e5.

Question 30. 14...e4 15 ♘d2 looks aggressive for Black!

Answer 30. This is slightly deceptive. The move ...e5-e4 does have the idea of starting a kingside attack: it drives away the knight from f3 and weakens White's defence of his kingside, in particular the h2-square. However, in order to exploit such a weakness, Black really needs a dark-squared bishop raking along the b8-h2 diagonal, opening up the possibility of ...♗d6xh2+ sacrifices, for example. Without this piece, Black does not have the firepower to attack on the kingside. His position consequently lacks flexibility which promises White a small stable advantage.

Question 31. What will White aim for?

Answer 31. White has several typical plans:

1. f2-f3 removing Black's centre pawn. White will aim to advance his e-pawn and to use the half-open f-file.

2. f2-f4 to close the kingside completely and to thus remove any lingering hopes Black might have of an attack there.

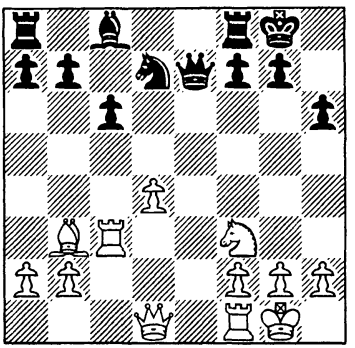
3. The queenside minority attack with b2-b4-b5.

Question 32. 14 ♗b3 doesn't seem to help with the last idea!

Answer 32. True. The extra point of 14 ♗b3 is stated by Karpov who notes: ' ...if the centre is blocked by 14...e4, White has already cleared the c-file.' This allows White to harass his opponent on the dark squares and to give him serious problems defending the e-pawn via a later ♖c3-c5-e5. For example, 15 ♘d2 ♘f6 (15...♔h8 [intending ...f7-f5] 16 ♕h5! ♘f6 17 ♕h4 followed by f2-f3 is annoying for Black) 16 ♕c2 ♗g4 (16...♗e6 17 ♘xe4!) 17 ♖b1!? ♗e2 18 ♗c4 ♗xc4 19 ♖xc4 followed by b2-b4-b5 gives White good chances. White should also aim to exchange queens: this removes Black's best defender of his dark squares and forestalls any possible hope of a kingside attack for Black.

In the game, Black chose a more dangerous option. The more solid 14...♖e8 is the subject of the next main game.

14...exd4 15 exd4!



Question 33. What? Are you sure about this?

Answer 33. Absolutely! White's voluntarily accepts an IQP for two reasons:

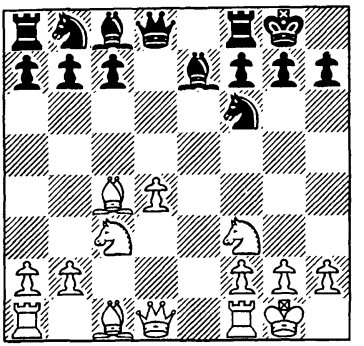
1. Black's temporary headache is his development: his knight blocks his light-squared bishop which in turn imprisons his queen's rook. Once this problem is solved, White will have nothing. Consequently White must open lines and 'get at' his opponent before Black can develop. The text fulfils this task brilliantly: the rook on f1 will come to e1 with a tempo on the black queen, and the rook on c3 can swing across to f3, g3 or h3 once the knight occupies the outpost on e5 that the pawn on d4 provides. 15 exd4! dramatically increases the activity of the White position.

2. IQP structures where Black has a pawn on c6 rather than e6 are generally favourable for White. This is known from the analysis of the QGA line 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e5 4 ♗xc4 exd4 5 exd4 ♘f6 6 ♘f3 ♗e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♘c3

see following diagram

and the same factors apply here. Without the cover of a pawn on e6, the black f7-pawn is exposed to the combination of a bishop on

the a2-g8 diagonal and a knight on the e5 outpost. Moreover, the e-file is more useful as an attacking file than the c-file, and although Black can use it for exchanges, it is also a valuable entry channel for White.



Question 34. How about Black's extra ...h7-h6 move?

Answer 34. As mentioned earlier, this position is a direct transposition to a line of the Orthodox QGD with the extra move ...h7-h6 included. Here, this is a distinct disadvantage for Black. With the knight on e5, the bishop on b3 and a possible queen excursion to the kingside, White will exert severe pressure against Black's kingside light-squares. The move ...h7-h6 weakens g6 and thus Black's whole kingside structure.

15...♘f6!? 16 ♖e1 ♕d6 17 ♘e5 ♘d5

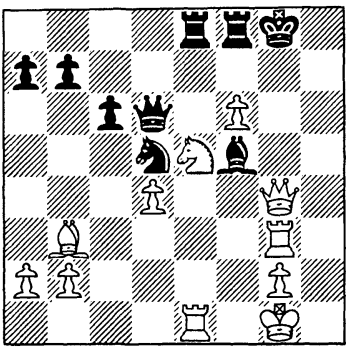
Beliavsky suggested 17...♗e6 18 ♗xe6 fxe6 19 ♕b3 ♕xd4 20 ♕xe6+ ♔h7 with equality in *ECO*, but Makarichev's 19 ♖g3!? is quite annoying for Black due to the weakness of his kingside.

18 ♖g3 ♗f5

Risky. 18...♗e6 was more solid though Zaitsev's 19 ♕d2 gives White a pleasant initiative. Black can never drive the white knight from e5 with ...f7-f6 due to the weakness of g6.

19 ♕h5! ♗h7 20 ♕g4! g5 21 h4 f6 22 hxg5 hxg5 23 f4! ♖ae8 24 fxg5! fxe5

This leads to a winning endgame for White. The more cunning 24...♗f5!? aiming for 25 ♕xf5 fxe5 to hide the black king behind the white g-pawn would have been refuted by Karpov's fantastic 25 gxf6+!!



25...♗xg4 26 ♖xg4+ ♔h8 27 ♘f7+ ♖xf7 28 ♖xe8+ ♖f8 29 f7 ♘f6 30 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 31 ♖g8+ ♘xg8 32 fxg8♕+ ♕xg8 33 ♗xg8 with a winning endgame!

25 g6 ♗xg6 26 dxe5 ♕e6 27 ♗xd5 cxd5 28 ♕xg6+ ♕xg6 29 ♖xg6+ ♔h7 30 ♖d6 ♖c8 31 ♖e3 ♖c2 32 ♖d7+ ♔g6 33 ♖xb7+- ♖e8 34 a3 d4 35 ♖d3 ♖xe5 36 ♖xd4 ♖g5 37 ♖d6+ ♔h5 38 ♖h7+ ♔g4 39 ♖d4+ ♔f5 40 ♖d5+ ♔g6 41 ♖g7+ ♔xg7 42 ♖xg5+ ♔f6 43 ♖b5 a6 44 ♖b6+ ♔e7 45 ♔h2 ♔d7 46 ♔h3 ♔c7 47 ♖b3 ♔d6 48 g4 ♔e5 49 ♔h4 ♔f6 50 ♖b6+ ♔g7 51 ♔h5 a5 52 ♖b7+ ♔g8 53 a4 1-0

This fantastic game has caused 14...exd4 to disappear from tournament play. Although Black may be able to play a little more accurately, it is clear that White enjoys a very dangerous initiative.

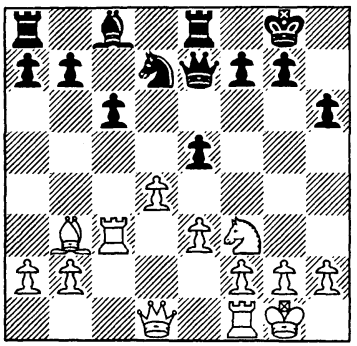
Question 35. One thing puzzles me: does Black really have to rush with 14...exd4 or 14...e4?

Answer 35. This is where the third scenario comes in!

Game 3
Cifuentes Parada-Korneev
Malaga 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7

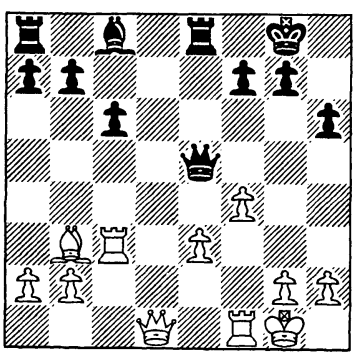
5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 ♘e4 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 ♖c1 c6 10 ♗d3 ♘xc3 11 ♖xc3 dxc4 12 ♗xc4 ♘d7 13 0-0 e5 14 ♗b3 ♖e8



This is a very reasonable idea. Black wants to play ...e5xd4 and then transfer his knight to the solid defensive square f8, covering the weak g6-square. Then...♗c8-e6 will follow to swap off the light-squared bishops. The 14...♖e8 idea was first played in P.Nikolic-Yusupov, Belgrade 1989 (just after Yusupov's match with Karpov) when 15 d5 cxd5 16 ♕xd5 ♘f6 17 ♕c5 ♘e4 18 ♕xe7 ♖xe7 19 ♖c2 ♘g5! gave White nothing. As you will see, the game continuation was not too inspiring for White either.

Question 36. Wow! So what can White do?

Answer 36. This is the time to go into the third scenario and play 15 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 16 dxe5 ♕xe5 17 f4!



White's idea is very simple: his next move is f4-f5. This has two strong points:

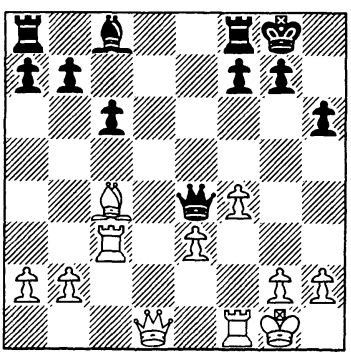
1. White stops ...♗c8-f5 and thus prevents Black from actively completing his development.

2. White intends f5-f6 with a strong attack.

Again, we have the transposition to a QGD Orthodox line (with the extra move ...h7-h6) This line was thoroughly tested in the 1930s and 1940s and in this case Black has stumbled into an inferior line. After 17...♕e4 (17...♕f6 18 f5! ♖d8 [to develop the bishop with ...♗c8-d7] 19 ♖d3! gives White a huge advantage as does 17...♕e7 18 f5! ♗d7 19 f6!) 18 f5! Black has big development problems as 18...♗xf5 loses to 19 ♗c2!

Question 37. Wait a minute, couldn't White play 14 ♘xe5 instead of 14 ♗b3?

Answer 37. He could indeed. This is a much better version for Black however. After 14 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 15 dxe5 ♕xe5 16 f4, 16...♕e4!

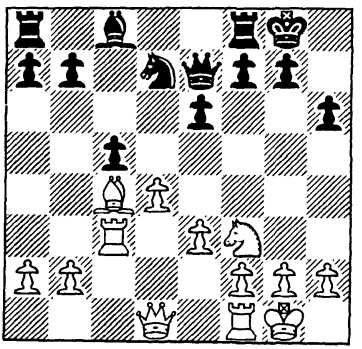


is best. Since White does not have the immediate ♗b3-c2, White must first protect e3 to drive the queen from e4. The standard line is 17 ♕e2 (intending ♗c4-d3) 17...♗f5! 18 ♗d3 ♕d5 19 e4 ♕d4+ 20 ♕f2 (20 ♔h1 ♖fe8 is fine for Black) 20...♕xf2+ 21 ♔xf2 ♗d7 22 ♖d1 ♖fd8 23 ♗c4 ♗e8 with a small but not very exciting edge for White.

The only other attempt I have seen from Black is 14...♖d8 in Zakharevich-Bezgodov, Perm 1997, when 15 ♖e1 exd4 16 exd4 ♕d6

17 d5 cxd5 18 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 19 ♗xd5 ♘f8 20 ♗b3 led to a draw. 17 ♖ce3 ♘f8 18 ♘e5 is much stronger (but not 18 ♖e7?? ♘e6! 19 ♗xe6 fxe6 which is rather embarrassing) when 18...♗e6 19 ♗xe6 (19 ♘xf7 ♗xf7 20 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 21 ♕b3+ ♔g6 [21...♔f6 22 ♖f3+ ♔g6 23 ♕c2+ is curtains] 22 ♖e6+ ♘xe6 23 ♖xe6+ ♕xe6+ 24 ♕xe6+ ♔h7 is fine for Black) 19...fxe6 (19...♘xe6 20 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 21 ♖xe6 ♕xe6 [21...♕xd4 22 ♕b3!] 22 ♖xe6 ♔xe6 23 ♕b3+!) 20 ♕h5 is powerful.
15 h3 exd4 16 exd4 ♘f8 17 d5 cxd5 18 ♗xd5 ½-½

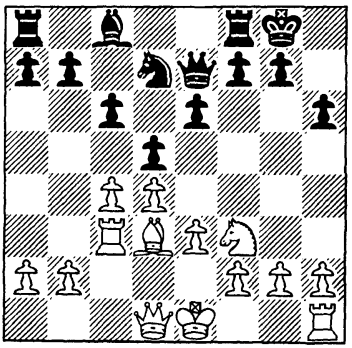
My final thought is the try 13...c5!?



As far as I can see, this is not mentioned in any reference book. I just remembered it from a book I read when I was 10 years old: *The Road to Chess Mastery*. That game occurred via the Orthodox move order and White caused trouble with ♗c4-d3, ♕d1-c2 and later ♘f3-g5 gaining time against the h7-pawn. Here, with the pawn already on h6, Black side-steps all these problems so the idea may be worth a go. It is a very flexible idea: Black can either capture on d4 and play ...♘d7-b6/f6 or he can switch back to the ...b7-b6 plan if necessary.

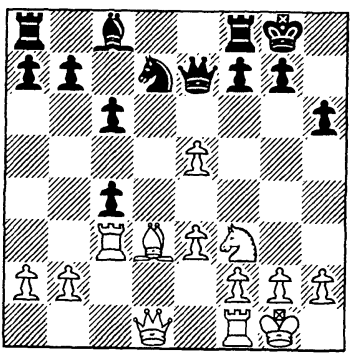
Game 4
P.Nikolic-Yusupov
Horgen 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 ♘e4 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 ♖c1 c6 10 ♗d3 ♘xc3 11 ♖xc3 ♘d7!?



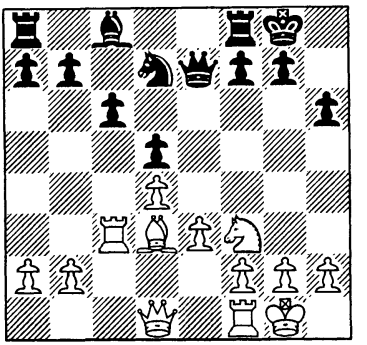
Question 38. What is the point of this move order?

Answer 38. Black will meet 12 0-0 with the immediate 12...e5!, threatening ...e5-e4. After 13 dxe5, Black plays the intermediate move 13...dxc4!



After 14 ♗xc4 ♘xe5, Black has transposed back into the 13...e5 line having side-stepped Karpov's dangerous 14 ♗b3 line! White's only other attempt is 14 ♖xc4 ♘xe5 15 ♖e4, but after 15...♘xf3+ 16 ♕xf3 ♗e6 17 ♗c4 ♖ad8 18 ♗xe6 fxe6 19 ♕e2 ♖d5 White has absolutely nothing: a draw was agreed in Sadler-Kramnik, Tilburg 1998.
12 cxd5! exd5 13 0-0

The position of the pawn on h6 gives White a pleasant edge in this typical position.



Question 41. Why?

Answer 41. Black's knight will have to move to let the bishop on c8 develop. When that happens, White's knight can move to e5. It will be very hard to dislodge with ...f7-f6 due to the weakness of g6. For example, after 13...♘f6 14 ♘e5! (Yusupov) 14...♘d7 15 f4! f6, 16 ♘g6! ♕xe3+ 17 ♔h1 ♖e8 (17...♕xd4 18 ♘e7+ ♔h8 19 ♕h5! is very dangerous for Black) 18 ♘e5!! is extremely strong: White threatens both ♗d3-h7+ and ♗d3-b1 trapping the queen! Consequently, Black has to be careful.

13...♖e8 14 ♕b1 ♘f6

14...a5!? stops b2-b4 but weakens the queenside and sets up the a-pawn as a target for White's major pieces, for example with ♖c3-a3 intending b2-b4.

15 b4

15 ♘e5 is also possible.

15...♘e4 16 ♗xe4 dxe4 17 ♘d2 ♗e6 18 ♖fc1 ♗d5 19 b5 ♖ad8 20 a4?!

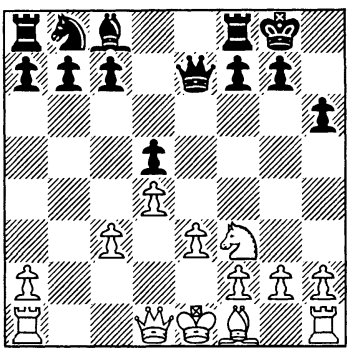
Intending a5-a6, but this is rather slow. 20 bxc6 bxc6 21 ♖c5! intending ♘d2-c4-e5 attacking the weak c6-pawn would have given White a slight advantage according to Yusupov.

20...h5! 21 ♖1c2 h4 22 h3 f5 23 bxc6 bxc6 24 ♘c4 c5! 25 dxc5 ♕xc5 26 ♘a3 ♕b6 27 ♕xb6 axb6 28 ♘b5 ♗f7 29 ♘d4 g6 30 ♖c6 ♖e7 31 ♖b2 ♖a8 32 ♖b4 ♖ea7 33 ♖bxb6 ♖xa4 34 ♖xg6+ ♗xg6 35 ♖xg6+ ♔f7 36 ♖h6 ♖xd4 37 exd4 ♖a1+ 38 ♔h2 ♖a2 39 ♔g1 ♖a1+ 40 ♔h2 ♖f1 41 ♖xh4 ♖xf2 42 ♔g1 e3 43 d5 ♖d2 44 ♔f1 ♖f2+ 45 ♔e1 ♖xg2 46 ♖f4 ♔f6 47 ♖f3 ♖d2 48 ♖xe3 ♖xd5 ½-½

We will now examine the currently less popular White choices.

Game 5
Kramnik-Lutz
Germany 1994

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 ♘e4 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 cxd5 ♘xc3 10 bxc3 exd5



In this way, White gets to play the Queen's Gambit twice! White intends c3-c4 to exchange Black's d5-pawn and remove the brake on his central expansion. Moreover, White gains the semi-open b- and c-files on which he can pressurise Black's queenside pawns.

Question 40. Just sounds good for White!

Answer 40. This line does have the ring of logic about it! However, the corollary to removing Black's centre pawns is the space Black gains in which to activate his pieces. For example, without the e6- and d5-pawns, the light-squared bishop gains the open c8-h3 and the a8-h1 diagonals. Moreover, due to the semi-open e- and d-files it is very difficult for White to use his central pawns as a positive force by pushing them forwards. Meanwhile, Black finds it much easier to

organise ...c7-c5 to 'dilute' the white centre with ...c5xd4. Black's activity and White's static central pawns seem to allow Black to hold the balance.

11 ♕b3

White gains a tempo against the d-pawn while tying down the light-squared bishop to the protection of b7.

11...♖d8 12 c4 dxc4 13 ♗xc4 ♘c6!

Threatening both ...♘c6xd4 and ...♘c6-a5.

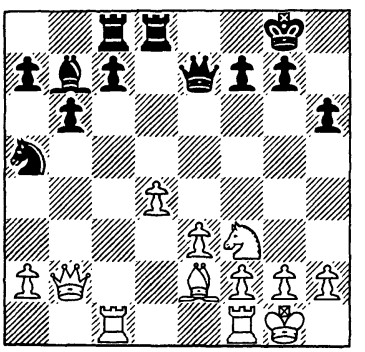
14 ♗e2

The alternative 14 ♕c3 is considered in the next main game.

14...b6!

An excellent plan according to Kramnik. Black activates his bishop on the long diagonal and prepares to free his position with ...♘c6-a5 and ...c7-c5.

15 0-0 ♗b7 16 ♖ac1 ♘a5 17 ♕b2 ♖ac8



Kramnik considers the position equal here. Unfortunately that doesn't guarantee a draw against Kramnik!

18 h3 c5 19 dxc5 ♖xc5 20 ♖xc5 ♕xc5 21 ♖c1 ♕e7 22 ♘d4 ♕g5 23 ♗g4 ♕d5 24 ♗f3 ♕d7 25 ♗xb7 ♘xb7 26 ♘c6 ♖a8 27 ♕d4 ♘c5?

Kramnik feels that Black should keep the queens on here with 27...♕e6! 28 ♕c4 ♕e8! with ...♘b7-c5 to follow. He now ruthlessly prosecutes a small advantage.

28 ♕xd7 ♘xd7 29 ♖d1 ♘c5 30 g4 g6 31 ♔g2 ♔g7 32 ♖d2 a6 33 ♖d6 ♖c8 34 ♘d4 b5 35 h4! b4 36 ♖b6 a5 37 ♖b5 ♘d3 38 ♖xa5 ♘e1+ 39 ♔g3 ♘c2 40 ♘b3 ♘a3 41 ♖a4 ♖c4 42 ♘d4 ♘c2 43 ♘f3 ♖c5 44 ♖a7 g5 45 h5 ♔g8 46 ♘d2 ♘a3 47 ♘e4 ♖c2 48 ♖b7 ♖xa2 49 ♖xb4 ♖c2 50 ♖b6 ♔h7 51 ♖b7 ♔g8 52 ♘d6 ♖c6 53 ♘xf7 ♘c4 54 ♖d7 ♖f6 55 ♖d4! 1-0

Game 6
Karpov-Yusupov
London (6th matchgame) 1989

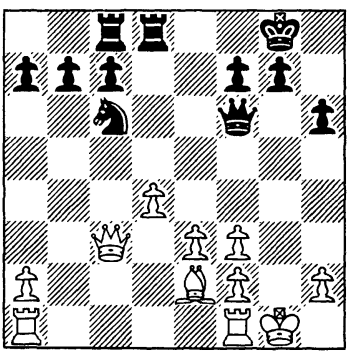
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 ♘e4 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 cxd5 ♘xc3 10 bxc3 exd5 11 ♕b3 ♖d8 12 c4 dxc4 13 ♗xc4 ♘c6 14 ♕c3

The alternative way of preventing ...♘c6-a5.

14...♗g4 15 0-0

Unfortunately White cannot prevent the doubling of his f-pawns, since 15 ♗e2 fails to 15...♗xf3 16 ♗xf3 ♘xd4 with a strong attack.

15...♗xf3 16 gxf3 ♕f6 17 ♗e2 ♖ac8!



A world-class move. Black prepares ...b7-b6, ...♘c6-e7 and then the typical ...c7-c5 to 'prune' White's centre. The position bears a distinct resemblance to the Chigorin Defence (1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♘c6).

18 ♖ab1 b6 19 ♖fc1 ♘e7 20 ♔h1 ♖d5!? 21 ♕c2 ♕h4! 22 f4!!

This excellent defensive move is the only way to deal with the threat of ...♖d5-h5. White just manages to hold the balance, but Black has all the chances.

22...♕xf2 23 ♗g4 ♕xc2 24 ♖xc2 f5 25 ♗f3 ♖d7 26 ♖bc1 ♘d5 27 ♗xd5+ ♖xd5 28 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 29 ♖xc7 ♖a5 30 d5 ♔f8 31 d6 ♔e8 32 ♖xg7 ♖xa2 33 ♔g1 a5 34 ♖e7+♔d8 35 e4 fxe4 36 ♖b7 e3 37 ♔f1 a4 38 ♖xb6 a3 39 ♖a6 ♖f2+ 40 ♔e1 a2 41 f5 ♔d7 42 f6 ♔e6 43 ♖a8! ♔xd6 44 f7 ♖xf7 45 ♖xa2 ♔c5 46 ♖a6 ½-½

Game 7
P.Nikolic-Lputian
Yerevan Olympiad 1996

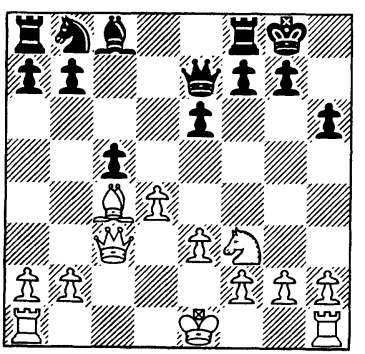
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 ♘e4 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 ♕c2

In contrast to 9 ♖c1, White plays to place his queen rather than a rook on c3. Although the queen discourages ...e6-e5 plans, it is less effective at stopping ...c7-c5 plans.

9...♘xc3 10 ♕xc3 dxc4 11 ♗xc4

Lputian-Vaganian, Yerevan 1996, saw the interesting 11 ♕xc4 b6 (11...c6 intending ...♘b8-d7 and ...e6-e5 is very sensible, now that the queen has moved from c3) 12 ♖c1 c5 13 dxc5 ♗a6 14 ♕h4 ♕xh4 15 ♘xh4 ♖c8 16 ♗e2 bxc5 17 ♘f3 ♗b7 18 0-0 ♘d7 with a small edge for White.

11...c5!



12 0-0

12 ♕a3 ♘d7 13 ♗b5 b6 14 ♗c6 ♖b8 15 0-0 (15 ♕xa7 cxd4!) is slightly better for White according to Beliavsky, but 15...♗b7 16 ♗xb7 ♖xb7 looks like a safe version of the 9 ♖c1 lines as a quick ...e6-e5 will follow.

12...cxd4!?

12...♘d7 is more sensible, intending either ...b7-b6 or ...c5xd4. For example, 13 ♖ac1 b6 14 ♗b5 ♗b7 15 ♗xd7 ♗xf3 16 gxf3 ♕xd7 17 dxc5 bxc5 should be fine for Black as 18 ♕xc5 ♕b7! regains the pawn.

Strangely enough 12...♘d7 actually transposes to the game Polugayevsky-Yudasin, Groningen 1993, with the extra (helpful) move ...h7-h6. That game ended quickly in a draw after 13 dxc5 ♘xc5 14 ♖fd1 ♗d7 15 ♘e5 ♖fc8. The actual move order in this game was a Lasker hybrid - 5...♘bd7 6 e3 ♘e4 7 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 8 ♕c2 ♘xc3 9 ♕xc3 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 c5 11 0-0 0-0.

13 ♘xd4 ♗d7 14 ♕b3 e5 15 ♘e2

Perhaps 15 ♕xb7!? exd4 and now not 16 ♕xa8 ♗c6! but 16 ♗d5! (Fritz) is crucial.

15...♘c6 16 ♗d5 ♘b4 17 ♘c3 ♘xd5 18 ♘xd5 ½-½

Lasker Hybrids

A major weapon on the Black side of the QGD is move order, and it is one that all the leading experts use to confuse their opponents. The essential Lasker move is ...♘f6-e4. It is typically played after castling and after ...h7-h6. Aside from the main lines that we have looked at, there are also three variants that all use the trademark move ...♘f6-e4, but in slightly different settings:

1. Black plays ...0-0 without ...h7-h6.
2. Black plays ...♘bd7 without ...h7-h6.
3. Black plays ...♘bd7 with ...h7-h6.

Black plays ...0-0 without ...h7-h6

Question 41. I meant to say! You said so many times that ...h7-h6 was a weakness!

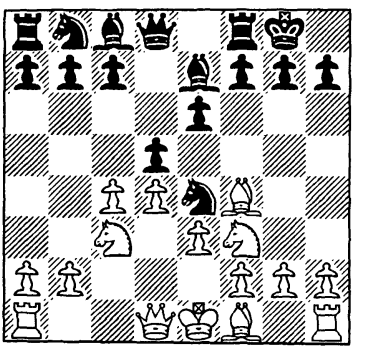
Answer 41. The 'natural' continuation for White leads to a direct transposition to an

Orthodox QGD: 5...0-0 6 e3 ♘e4 7 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 8 ♖c1 c6 9 ♗d3 ♘xc3 10 ♖xc3 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♘d7 12 0-0 e5 is the same as 6...♘bd7 7 ♖c1 c6 8 ♗d3 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♘d5 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 0-0 ♘xc3 12 ♖xc3 e5. Although Karpov seems happy to play this as White, there are more critical tests of the Orthodox, so it is natural for White to look for something better.

Question 42. So what's he got?

Answer 42. I'm glad you asked me that! White has two ideas:

1. 7 ♗f4!?



Without ...h7-h6, ♗g5-h4 White can foil Black's plan of exchanging the dark-squared bishops, without having to give up the bishop pair. There are no recent examples of this move between strong players but it looks very reasonable.

2. 7 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 8 ♖c1 c6 9 ♗d3 ♘xc3 10 ♖xc3 dxc4 11 ♖xc4

White's idea is to gain a tempo for development with ♕c2, hitting h7. This may be enough to turn the line in his favour, as we see in this next game.

Game 8
Portisch-Dizdar
Sarajevo 1986

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘e4 7 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 8 ♖c1 c6 9 ♗d3 ♘xc3

9...f5 is possible here, but this is not a great Dutch for Black.

10 ♖xc3 dxc4 11 ♖xc4 ♘d7 12 0-0

Natural, but there is another idea in this position: 12 ♕c2!?

Question 43. What's the point?

Answer 43. In the game, Dizdar met White's pressure against h7 with ...g7-g6 rather than ...h7-h6. He did this in order not to weaken the kingside dark squares so that if White ever played ♘f3-e5, he could still meet it with ...f7-f6. However, in the game Grünfeld-Van den Bosch, Amsterdam 1936, after 12 ♕c2 g6, White played 13 ♘e5!? preventing the freeing ...e6-e5. After 13...♘xe5 14 dxe5, not only are Black's kingside dark squares weak, but White has the makings of a dangerous attack with h2-h4-h5! If Black plays 12...h6 then 13 ♘e5 is less effective (though still possible) but after 13 0-0 e5 14 ♖e1, White has a slightly better version of Portisch-Dizdar!

12...e5 13 ♕c2 g6 14 ♖e1 ♘b6

As Dizdar points out, the obvious 14...♖e8 fails rather embarrassingly to 15 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 16 dxe5 ♕xe5 17 ♖e4! winning a rook! He also suggests 14...♖d8!?

15 ♖c5 ♘d7 16 ♖c3 ♖e8

This is possible now that the rook has been chased back to c3.

17 ♗f1 e4 18 ♘d2 ♘f6 19 ♖c5 ♘d5 20 ♗c4! b6! 21 ♗xd5 cxd5 22 ♖xd5 f6!

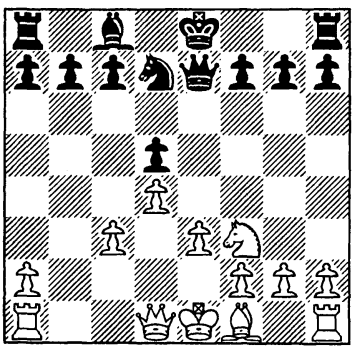
Dizdar claims compensation for the pawn for Black as the rook is surprisingly short of squares. The position is extremely complex.

23 ♕xe4!? ♕xe4 24 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 25 ♖d8+ ♔f7 26 ♖c1 ♖e8 27 ♖c7+ ♔f8 28 ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 29 ♖xh7 a5 30 h4 a4 31 f3 ♖a5 32 ♖h8+ ♔d7 33 ♖g8 ♖b5 34 ♖xg6 ♔e6 35 ♖g7 ♗d7 36 e4 ♖xb2 37 h5 ♖c2 38 d5+ ♔d6 39 ♖g8 ♖c7 40 ♖d8 ♔e5 41 d6! ♖c1+ 1-0

Black plays ...♘bd7 without ...h7-h6

Question 44. What is the point of an early ...♘b8-d7?

Answer 44. In general, the difference between ...0-0 and ...♘b8-d7 is not so great. For example, after 5...♘bd7 6 e3 ♘e4 7 ♗xe7 (7 ♗f4 is again possible: note that 7...g5!? 8 ♗g3 h5 9 cxd5! ♘xc3 10 bxc3 exd5 [10...h4 11 dxe6 fxe6 12 ♗e5!] 11 h4 is good for White) 7...♕xe7 8 ♖c1 ♘xc3 9 ♖xc3 c6 (9...dxc4 10 ♗xc4 c5 11 dxc5 ♘xc5 12 ♗b5+! forces the awkward 12...♘d7 as 12...♗d7 13 ♖xc5 wins) 10 ♗d3 will transpose into Portisch-Dizdar.



Question 45. I thought that White could not get the advantage in these lines!

Answer 45. The difference is that Black has already committed his knight to d7. Remember that Black was playing ...♘b8-c6 in the main line. Consequently, Black's most active lines are cut out here.

After 10 ♕b3, there are not really any presentable games in this move order. However, 10...♘f6 11 c4 c6 12 ♗d3 ♗e6 13 0-0 ♖c8 14 ♖ab1 ♖c7 15 cxd5 ♗xd5 16 ♕a4 0-0 was played by Andersson against P.Nikolic at Leningrad 1987 (with an extra ...h7-h6) and is assessed in *Informator* as unclear. In general, I feel that this type of position favours White slightly. Note that 10...♘b6 (to stop c3-c4) 11 a4 a5 12 ♗b5+! ♗d7 and now either 13 ♘e5 ♗xb5 14 ♕xb5+ ♔f8 or 13 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 14 ♘e5 ♕d6 15 ♕b5+ ♔e7 16 0-0 ♖he8 17 ♕d3 g6 18 e4 as in Vidmar-Furlani, Ljubljana 1938, is very awkward for Black.

Black plays ...♘bd7 with ...h7-h6

This will be very similar to normal lines. After 5...h6 6 ♗h4 ♘bd7 7 e3 ♘e4 8 ♗xe7 (8 ♗g3!?) 8...♕xe7 9 ♖c1, the likelihood is that the game will transpose to the main lines. An independent continuation for White was seen quite recently.

Game 9
Sadler-Short
British Ch. playoff, Torquay 1998

1 d4 e6 2 c4 ♘f6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 ♘bd7 7 e3 ♘e4 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 ♘xe4!? dxe4 10 ♘d2 f5 11 ♕h5+!

The point. Since Black cannot now play ...g7-g6, he must allow an exchange of queens.

11...♕f7 12 ♕xf7+ ♔xf7 13 f3

A new move although this is a suggestion of Korchnoi's. 13 c5 has been played until now with good results for Black. After 13...e5 14 ♗c4+ ♔e7 15 0-0-0 exd4 16 exd4 ♘f6 17 ♖he1 ♖d8 18 d5 b5!? the position was unclear in Korchnoi-Andersson, Brussels 1988.

13...exf3 14 ♘xf3

14 exf3 e5 15 f4!? was assessed by Korchnoi as slightly better for White. The text is more modest, but keeps a small initiative. Just please avert your eyes around move 33...!

14...b6 15 ♗d3 ♗b7 16 0-0 g6 17 e4 ♔g7 18 exf5 exf5 19 d5 c6 20 dxc6 ♗xc6 21 ♘d4 ♗b7 22 b4 ♖he8 23 ♖fd1 ♘e5 24 ♗f1 ♖e7 25 c5 bxc5 26 bxc5 ♖f8 27 ♖ac1 ♖f6 28 ♗b5 ♘c6 29 a4 a6 30 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 31 ♘xc6 ♖xc6 32 ♖d6 ♖ec7 33 ♖e1?? ♖xd6 34 cxd6 ♖d7 35 ♖e5 ♔f6 36 ♖a5 ♖xd6 37 h4 g5 38 hxg5+ ♔xg5 39 ♔h2 ♔g4 40 ♖c5 f4 41 ♖c8 ♖d4 42 ♖c6 ♖xa4 43 ♖xh6 a5 44 ♖g6+ ♔f5 45 ♖c6 ♖a3 46 ♖c8 a4 47 ♖f8+ ♔e4 48 ♖e8+ ♔d4 49 ♖f8 ♔e3 50 ♖e8+ ♔d2 51 ♖e4 f3 52 gxf3 ♖xf3 53 ♖xa4 ½-½

Summary

In conclusion, the Lasker is solid but slightly passive for Black. It is the type of line that can be recommended against an all-out attacking player who will not find the patient play demanded of White to his liking. White's best hope of a lasting advantage lies in the 9 ♖c1 lines seen in Games 1-4.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0

5...h6 6 ♗h4 ♘bd7 7 e3 ♘e4 – *Game 9*

6 e3 h6

6...♘e4 – *Game 8*

7 ♗h4 ♘e4 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 *(D)* **9 ♖c1**

9 cxd5 ♘xc3 10 bxc3 exd5 11 ♕b3 ♖d8 12 c4 dxc4 13 ♗xc4 ♘c6

14 ♗e2 – *Game 5*

14 ♕c3 – *Game 6*

9 ♕c2 – *Game 7*

9...c6 10 ♗d3 ♘xc3 11 ♖xc3 *(D)* **dxc4**

11...♘d7 – *Game 4*

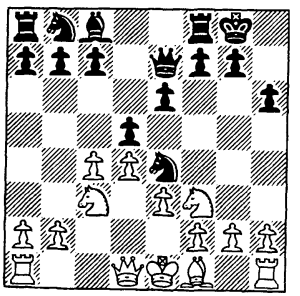
12 ♗xc4 ♘d7 13 0-0 *(D)* **b6**

13...e5 14 ♗b3

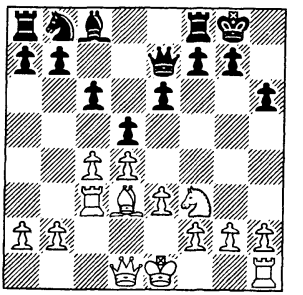
14...exd4 – *Game 2*

14...♖e8 – *Game 3*

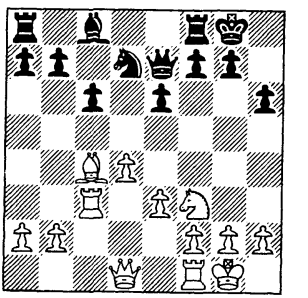
14 ♗d3 – *Game 1*



8...♕xe7

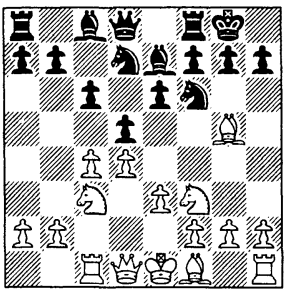


11 ♖xc3



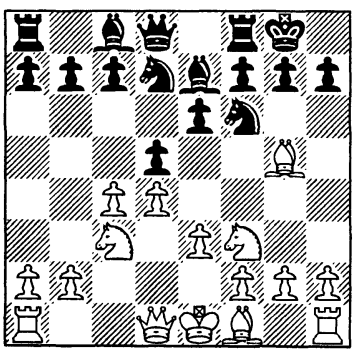
13 0-0

CHAPTER TWO



Orthodox Variation (6...♘bd7): Old Main Line with 7 ♖c1 c6

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7



Question 1. What is Black aiming for in this line?

Answer 1. As always in the QGD, Black's general opening aims remain the activation of his light-squared bishop and the creation of central counterplay with ...c7-c5 or ...e6-e5. With the flexible 6...♘bd7, Black provides support for both central breaks while retaining the option of the Lasker manoeuvre ...♘f6-e4 to free his position with exchanges.

The Orthodox QGD offers a large choice of development schemes for Black. These fall broadly into two categories:

1. Black strikes quickly against the centre, intending to solve his development problems by liquidating the centre. This includes systems with an immediate ...c7-c5, or with first ...d5xc4 and then ...c7-c5.

2. Black first develops his position by exchanges or quiet manoeuvring before striking back at the centre. This includes the Classical systems introduced by ...c7-c6, and lines with a preliminary ...a7-a6, to follow up with ...d5xc4 and...b7-b5. (I think of this as the QGA option, since the idea of freeing b7 for the light-squared bishop is frequently seen in that opening, e.g. 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♕e2 b5 8 ♗b3 ♗b7).

It is clear that ...d5xc4 is an integral part of most of Black's plans. This leads to some opening subtleties which Tartakower called the 'fight for the tempo'.

Question 2. What does that mean?

Answer 2. White will complete his development by moving his light-squared bishop to d3 or e2 and then castling kingside. However, White would prefer to meet ...d5xc4 with ♗f1xc4 rather than to waste a tempo first with ♗f1-d3 and then reach c4 in two moves after ...d5xc4, ♗d3xc4.

This is the reason why White most often plays 7 ♖c1 or 7 ♕c2 rather than 7 ♗d3: White makes an extra useful move and waits for Black to commit himself with ...d5xc4. In

turn Black often also attempts to play useful strengthening moves before playing ...d5xc4: for example ...a7-a6 or ...♖f8-e8. This little battle is a sub-plot to Black's main opening aims.

Game 10
Karpov-Campora
Villarrobledo (rapidplay) 1997

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1

By activating his queen's rook, White prevents his opponent from using the Lasker manoeuvre as 7...♘e4 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 cxd5 ♘xc3 10 ♖xc3 exd5 11 ♖xc7 loses the undefended c-pawn.

7...c6

This is the Old Main Line of the QGD. By placing the c-pawn on a protected square and consolidating his centre, Black renews the idea of ...♘f6-e4. The drawback is that Black's freeing break ...c6-c5 will take two moves instead of just one.

8 ♗d3

Question 3. I'm a bit confused. Isn't White just losing your 'fight for a tempo'?

Answer 3. Black's choice of the consolidating 7...c6 in response to 7 ♖c1 means that if Black subsequently plays the ...c6-c5 break, he will have done so in two moves instead of just one. Consequently, White sees nothing wrong in playing the bishop to d3 now, since the tempo lost on ♗f1-d3xc4 will be regained if Black plays ...c6-c5. 8 ♗d3 also restricts Black's options by preventing any attempt to transpose to a Lasker system: 8...♘e4 9 ♘xe4! dxe4 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 ♗xe4 wins a pawn, while 8...h6 is met by 9 ♗f4! (9 ♗h4 ♘e4! is more than Black deserves; but 9 cxd5!? is a typical and interesting idea as 9...hxg5 10 dxe6 fxe6 11 ♘xg5 gives dangerous compensation for the piece).

Question 4. Isn't it strange to play first ♗c1-g5 and then ♗g5-f4?

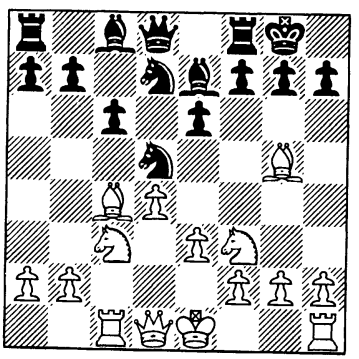
Answer 4. In fact, this is a typical and excellent way of crossing Black's plans. Black strengthened his centre with ...c7-c6 in order to exchange the dark-squared bishops with ...♘f6-e4, or ...d5xc4 and ...♘f6-d5 before striking back at the centre. By retreating the bishop to f4, White avoids his opponent's plan and transposes back to a 5 ♗f4 system, against which ...c7-c6 systems are not very effective.

Question 5. Can't Black just chase the bishop with 9...♘h5?

Answer 5. White then plays the typical 10 ♗e5! when 10...♘xe5 (otherwise White will play h2-h3 and ♗e5-h2, leaving the black knight in limbo on h5) 11 dxe5! gives White a clear advantage due to the terminally offside knight on h5. For example, Thomas-Lasker, Nottingham 1936, continued 11...g6 12 0-0 ♗d7 13 ♕d2 dxc4 14 ♗xc4 ♕c7 15 ♘e4 ♖ad8 16 ♕c3 with a mighty position for White. Black must consequently find another way to liberate his position.

The alternative 8 ♕c2 is the subject of Games 13-16.

8...dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♘d5!



The standard, but ingenious solution!

10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 0-0

11 ♘e4 is also popular - see Games 11 and 12.

11...♘xc3 12 ♖xc3

We analysed this position in the Lasker system, but with Black's h-pawn on h6 rather

than h7.

Question 5. Who does this favour?

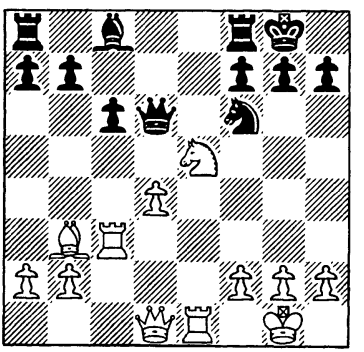
Answer 5. This factor is in White's favour in the 12...b6 system since White will gain a useful tempo on the h7-pawn with a future ♕d1-c2 and ♗c4-d3. However, it is undoubtedly in Black's favour in the 12...e5 system.

Question 6. Why is that?

Answer 6. White's kingside initiative in Karpov-Yusupov flowed against Black's kingside light squares. Consequently, the h-pawn is a much better defensive unit on h7, where it covers the g6-square, than on h6 where it is merely a target for attack.

The question is whether this factor is sufficiently important to enable Black to neutralise his opponent's initiative.

12...e5 13 ♗b3 exd4 14 exd4! ♘f6 15 ♖e1 ♕d6 16 ♘e5



16...♗f5?

In this position 16...♗e6 can be met by 17 ♗xe6 fxe6 (17...♕xe6 18 ♘g6!) 18 ♕b3 as after 18...♕xd4 19 ♕xe6+ the black king does not have h7 available in this line. Obviously, Black should protect his b-pawn with either 18...♖ab8 or 18...♕e7. In this case, White's best plan is to double rooks on the e-file and transfer the knight to c5 via d3. White's position is the more pleasant, but Black does only have one weakness and some potential activity along the f-file. This is Black's best as 16...♘d5 17 ♖g3 f6 (possible as g6 is covered by the h7-pawn) 18 ♘c4 ♕f4 19 ♕h5! looks very promising for White. The text is very risky.

17 ♖f3?!

I would have been very tempted by 17 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 18 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 19 ♕b3+. White is going to pick up the whole black queenside: for example 19...♔f8 20 ♕xb7 ♖b8 21 ♕xa7 ♖xb2 is met by 22 ♖xc6! as 22...♕xc6 23 ♕a3+! forks the king and rook.

17...♗g4?

A fatal blunder.

18 ♖xf6 ♕xe5 19 dxe5 ♗xd1 20 ♗xf7+! ♖xf7 21 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 22 ♖xd1 ♔e6 23 f4 a5 24 ♔f2 ♖a6 25 ♖d6+ ♔e7 26 ♔e3 ♖b6 27 b3 a4 28 ♖d3 ♔e6 29 g4 c5 30 h4 ♖b4 31 h5 h6 32 bxa4 ♖xa4 33 ♖d6+ ♔e7 34 ♖b6 ♖xa2 35 ♖xb7+ ♔e6 36 ♖b6+ ♔e7 37 ♖c6 ♖g2 38 ♔f3 ♖c2 39 ♔e4 c4 40 ♖c7+ ♔d8 41 ♖xg7 ♖d2 42 ♖a7 c3 43 ♖a3 ♖e2+ 44 ♔f5 ♖e3 45 ♖a4 c2 46 ♖c4 ♖e2 47 g5 hxg5 48 fxg5 ♔e7 49 h6 ♖h2 50 ♖c7+ ♔d8 51 ♖c5 ♔e7 52 ♔g6 1-0

This is a simple and fairly effective method against the Old Main Line. White has many other options however.

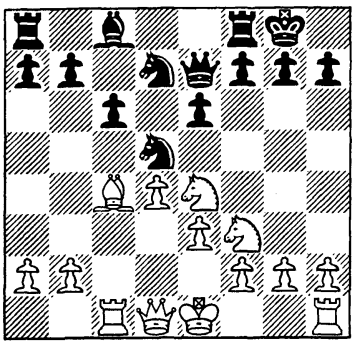
Game 11
Topalov-Yermolinsky
Yerevan Olympiad 1996

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 d4 ♘bd7 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♖c1 c6 8 ♗d3 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♘d5 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 ♘e4!?

see following diagram

Question 7. What does this do?

Answer 7. The first achievement of this move is to deter Black from using his central breaks as 11...c5 loses a pawn to 12 ♗xd5 cxd5 13 ♘xc5, while 11...e5 12 dxe5 ♘xe5 13 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 14 ♗xd5 cxd5 15 ♘c3 ♖d8 16 ♕d4 leads to a typical endgame advantage for White (knight vs. bad bishop).



White also understands that his opponent wishes to exchange pieces to ease his cramped position. Consequently, White avoids the exchange of pieces as the best way of crossing Black's plans. White intends to use his pawn centre and by avoiding exchanges, he makes sure that it will have targets to attack and brush aside as it advances.

Question 8. Sounds good!

Answer 8. In theory, yes. However, the plan is time-consuming: e4 is after all a temporary square for the knight. Since White's plan is to activate his central pawns, the knight will have to move again to allow the e-pawn to advance which will cost another tempo. Consequently, Black gains some time for his development.

11...♘5f6

Black persistently looks for exchanges. 11...b6 is a more ambitious idea. Black uses the time that White spends with his queen's knight for development rather than exchanges. My appetite for this variation was whetted by the fantastic game Portisch-Ljubojevic, Milan 1975, which continued 12 0-0 ♗b7 13 ♘g3 (intending e3-e4) 13...c5 14 e4 ♘f4! 15 ♗b5 (preventing 15...cxd4 due to 16 ♖c7; 15 d5 exd5 16 exd5 ♖ad8 17 ♕d2 ♕f6 18 ♖fe1 ♖fe8 19 ♖e3 ♘e5 20 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 21 ♖f3 ♘h3+ 22 ♔f1 ♕g5 was very active for Black in Groszpeter-Almasi, Budapest 1992) 15...♖fd8 16 ♕a4 ♘f6 17 e5 ♘6d5 18 dxc5 a6 19 ♗e2 bxc5 20 a3 g5!! (I love this move!) 21 ♖fd1 g4 22 ♘e1 and now 22...♕g5 would have given Black a very good game according to Ljubojevic. Amazing activity! The logical 13 ♘e5 is suggested by Ljubojevic: once the knight on d7 is removed, ...c6-c5 is difficult to achieve, but there is scope for ideas here.

12 ♘g3!?

This was Alekhine's ambitious idea. White continues to avoid the exchange of knights and prepares e3-e4-e5 followed by ♘g3-e4-d6. However, White loses his control over his opponent's pawn breaks. The alternative 12 ♘xf6+ is the subject of the next main game.

12...e5

The simplest. 12...♕b4+ 13 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 14 ♔xd2 gives White a small edge, while 12...♖d8 13 0-0 c5 14 e4 cxd4 15 e5 ♘e8 16 ♖e1 (16 ♕xd4 ♘b6 17 ♕e4 ♗d7! equalises according to Ehlvest, as 18 ♕xb7 ♘xc4 19 ♖xc4 ♖db8 followed by ...♗d7-b5 wins the exchange) 16...♘f8 17 ♘xd4 ♘g6 18 ♕d2 b6! was a little cramped but playable for Black in Ivanchuk-Ehlvest, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

13 0-0 exd4 14 ♘f5

14 ♘xd4 is met by 14...g6 15 ♖e1 ♖d8 with ...c6-c5 to follow according to Yermolinsky.

14...♕d8 15 ♘5xd4

15 ♘3xd4 (15 ♕xd4 ♘b6 16 ♗d3 ♕xd4 17 ♘3xd4 ♖d8 18 ♖fd1 ♔f8 gave White very little in Alterman-Hertneck, Bad Wiessee 1997) 15...♘e5 16 ♗b3 ♗xf5 17 ♘xf5 was the famous game Alekhine-Lasker, Zurich 1934, and now 17...g6! (instead of 17...♕b6? 18 ♕d6!) 18 ♕d4 ♕xd4 19 ♘xd4 was agreed drawn in Flohr-Euwe, Nottingham 1936.

15...♘b6 16 ♗d3 ♕e7 17 ♕c2 ♗g4 18 a3 ♖ad8 19 ♖fe1 ♘bd7

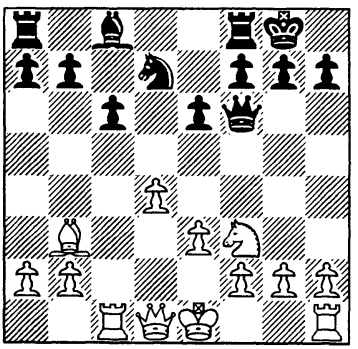
Black has equalised according to Yermolinsky.

20 ♘g5 h6 21 ♘h7 ♖fe8 22 h3 ♗e6 23

♘xf6+ ♕xf6 24 ♗f1 ♗d5 25 f3 ♘e5 26 ♕f2 a6 27 b4 b5 28 ♖ed1 ♘c4 29 e4 ♗e6 30 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 31 ♖d2 ♖d7 32 ♖cd1 ♖ed8 33 f4 g5 34 fxg5 ♕xg5 35 ♘f3 ♖xd2 36 ♖xd2 ♖xd2 37 ♕xd2 ♕e7 38 ♕d4 a5 39 ♕e5 ♕a7+ 40 ♘d4 axb4 41 axb4 ♗e6 42 ♔h2 ♕d7 43 ♔g3 ♔h7 44 ♔f4 ♕a7 45 ♕c5 ♕c7+ 46 ♔f3 ♕d7 47 ♕e5 ♔g8 48 ♔g3 ♔h7 49 ♔h4 ♕e7+ 50 ♔g3 ♕d7 ½-½

Game 12
Korchnoi-Hübner
Biel 1986

1 ♘f3 d5 2 c4 e6 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1 c6 8 ♗d3 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♘d5 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 ♘e4 ♘5f6 12 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 13 ♗b3



Question 9. It doesn't seem very logical to avoid the exchange of knights with 11 ♘e4 and then to agree the move after!

Answer 9. As we saw, 12 ♘g3 was too time-consuming so the text is very sensible.

Question 10. It just looks like a worse version of the 11 0-0 line.

Answer 10. White does have fewer attacking chances in this line: his rook is less active on c1 than c3, and after ...e6-e5xd4, e3xd4 White cannot gain a tempo on the queen with ♖f1-e1. However, the position of the queen on f6 gives White a tempo for an endgame possibility.

Question 11. Why does White play 13 ♗b3 before castling?

Answer 11. Maybe Korchnoi wanted to avoid 13...c5 after 13 0-0. This isn't really a problem though as 14 dxc5 ♘xc5 15 b4! looked very pleasant for White in Schmidt-Prandstetter, Prague 1984.

13...e5 14 0-0 exd4

14...♖d8 15 ♘xe5! ♘xe5 16 dxe5 ♖xd1 17 exf6 ♖xc1 18 ♖xc1 gxf6 19 ♖d1 ♗f5 20 e4! ♗xe4 21 ♖d7 is slightly better for White according to Korchnoi.

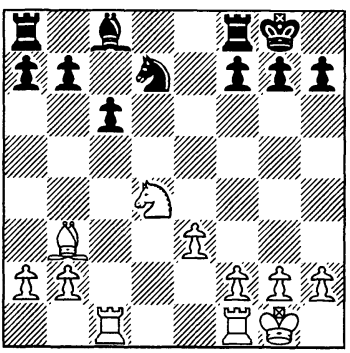
15 ♕xd4! ♕xd4

This has been the exclusive choice, but it brings the white knight to a strong square in the endgame for free. 15...♕e7!? is very sensible, intending to develop with ...♘d7-b6/f6 and ...♗c8-e6.

Question 12. Hasn't Black just lost time with ...♕e7-f6-e7?

Answer 12. Yes, but in return he has avoided the dangerous IQP lines with e3xd4 and thus greatly curtailed White's activity.

16 ♘xd4



Question 13. Hasn't Black just equalised here?

Answer 13. Unfortunately not!

Question 14. But Black has done everything right!

Answer 14. As I mentioned when analysing the Lasker system, by exchanging pieces, Black makes himself safe from an immediate assault but he does not guarantee himself

equality. This game is a good example of a practical method of play that White can use against the most brazenly exchange-orientated lines of the QGD. White doesn't seek to get the maximum out of his position, but he plays for a small durable edge and the prospect of torturing his opponent. White's stable advantage is based on three factors:

1. A lead in development.

2. Better minor pieces. For example, compare active White's light-squared bishop on b3 and Black's bishop on c8. Black's light-squared bishop has few tempting squares: White's knight takes away f5 and e6.

3. The most important factor: the dynamism of the respective pawn majorities. It is clear that neither side will be able to engineer a quick breakthrough with their pieces – it just isn't that sort of position. Consequently, the initial aim for both sides is to gain space; in the future, the pawns will be used to drive the opposing pieces from their ideal defensive posts and thus create space for your own pieces to exploit. Due to his lead in development and more active pieces, it is much easier for White to expand on the kingside than it is for Black to expand on the queenside. This inevitably gives White the early initiative in the endgame.

Question 15. Oh no! Sounds bad!

Answer 15. It isn't all doom and gloom! Black doesn't have any real weaknesses so his disadvantage is manageable. However, if you are not prepared to suffer a bit in order to secure the draw, then playing this position can be thoroughly demoralising!

16...♖d8 17 ♖cd1!?

This is aimed against the development of Black's knight. 17 ♖fd1 ♘f8 18 f3 was normal and is assessed by Korchnoi as slightly better for White.

17...♘e5

17...♘c5 18 ♘xc6 ♖xd1 19 ♖xd1 ♗g4 20 ♖d4! bxc6 21 ♖xg4 ♘xb3 22 axb3 is clearly better for White according to Korchnoi.

18 f4 ♘g6 19 h3 ♗d7 20 ♔f2 ♔f8 21 ♖d2 c5 22 ♘f3 ♗e8 23 ♖fd1 ♖xd2+ 24 ♖xd2 ♖c8

24...f6! was better according to Korchnoi. The text allows an audacious pawn grab.

25 ♘g5 c4 26 ♗c2 ♔e7 27 ♘xh7 f6 28 ♖d4 ♗f7 29 ♗f5 ♖c5 30 g4 ♖b5 31 ♖d7+ ♔e8 32 ♖d2 ♖a5 33 a4 a6 34 ♔g3 ♖xf5 35 gxf5 ♘e7 36 e4 ♗g8 37 ♘xf6+ gxf6 38 ♖d6 b5 39 axb5 axb5 40 ♖b6 ♘c8 41 ♖xb5 ♘d6 42 ♖b8+ ♔f7 43 ♔f3 ♔g7 44 ♖b6 1-0

Question 16. Is 8...dxc4 the only way that Black can look for counterplay?

Answer 16. No, with 8...a6 Black can attempt to revert to the queenside plans normally introduced by 7...a6. White's most aggressive try is 9 c5 which transposes into the next chapter, but White has other moves: 9 a4 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 b5!? (10...♘d5 11 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 12 0-0 ♘xc3 13 ♖xc3 e5 gives White the extra possibility of a4-a5 fixing the black queenside structure) 11 axb5 (11 ♗d3 bxa4! [intending ...a4-a3] is irritating as 12 ♘xa4 ♕a5+ is disruptive – 13 ♘d2 is not possible here as the bishop on g5 is loose) 11...cxb5 12 ♗d3 ♗b7 13 0-0 was slightly better for White in Csonkiks-Velvart, Hungarian Team Championship 1994, as Black cannot organise any pawn pressure against the white centre, while 9 b3 is my personal favourite.

Question 17. What does this do?

Answer 17. Now ...d5xc4 is simply met by b3xc4! After 9...b5 10 0-0 (10 c5!? is also interesting as after 10...e5 11 dxe5, White gains the idea of ♘f3-d4 hitting the undefended c6-pawn) 10...bxc4 11 bxc4 dxc4 12 ♗xc4 c5 13 ♕e2 with ♖f1-d1 to follow, White has a slight edge.

8 ♗d3 is an uncomplicated route to a slight advantage. However, White can also try more ambitiously to win the 'battle of the tempo' by further delaying ♗f1-d3. He can do this with either 8 ♕c2 or 8 a3.

Question 18. Okay, 8 ♕c2 I understand, but why is 8 a3 useful?

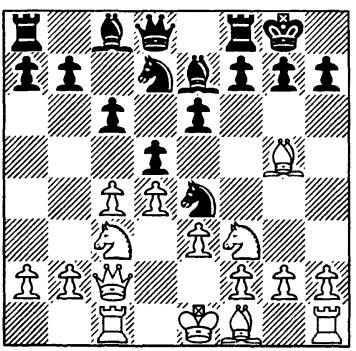
Answer 18. In general, 8 a3 adds to the

'comfort' of the White position: it provides a retreat on a2 for the light-squared bishop in the event of ...d5xc4 and ...b7-b5, and denies the use of b4 to the black pieces while supporting the space-gaining b2-b4.

8...dxc4 is not tempting for Black as it leads to the main lines with a useful extra move for White. Consequently, his most active possibility is 8...♘e4 (8...a6 is considered in Games 14-16).

Game 13
Pinter-Prandstetter
Taxco Interzonal 1985

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1 c6 8 ♕c2 ♘e4!?



Now that White has played his queen to c2, Black attempts to transpose into the ♕c2 variation of the Lasker system, which is usually less dangerous for Black.

Question 19. Wait a minute! Isn't Black just losing a pawn?

Answer 19. Amazingly not! After 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 10 ♘xe4 dxe4 11 ♕xe4, Black has 11...♕b4+ 12 ♘d2 ♕xb2 regaining his pawn. The endings after 13 ♕c2 ♕xc2 14 ♖xc2 e5 are fine for Black, but White can try 13 ♖b1 as the pawn grab 13...♕xa2 14 ♗d3 ♘f6 (14...g6 15 h4! was very strong in Ftacnik-Ree, Lucerne Olympiad 1982) 15 ♕h4! (intending g4-g5) is too dangerous for Black. 13...♕a3 (13...♕c3!?) is thus normal preventing 14 ♗d3 due to 14...♘f6! winning a piece. After 14 ♗e2 (14 ♖b3 ♕c1+ 15 ♔e2 e5 16 g3 was Agdestein-Prandstetter, Taxco Interzonal 1985, and now Prandstetter mentions 16...f5 17 ♕d3 e4 18 ♕b1 ♕xb1 with ...c6-c5 and ...b7-b6 to follow instead of the wild 16...♘c5!? 17 dxc5 ♖d8 18 ♖d3 ♗g4+! 19 f3 f5! which led to incredible complications) 14...♕e7 15 f4 c5 16 0-0 ♖b8 17 f5 ♘f6 18 ♕f4 ♗d7 19 e4 exf5 20 e5 cxd4 21 exf6 ♕xe2, the game was a mess in Ftacnik-Franzen, Czechoslovakia 1984, as 22 ♕g5 is countered by 22...♕g4!

Timman-Prandstetter, Taxco Interzonal 1985, saw the quieter 10 ♗d3, when 10...♘xc3 11 bxc3 h6 12 cxd5 exd5 13 0-0 ♘f6 14 c4 led to a type of position we saw in the section on Lasker hybrids in Chapter 1 (P.Nikolic-Andersson, Leningrad 1987) which favours White slightly. Prandstetter played more accurately against Smejkal at Trencianske Teplice 1985 with 11...dxc4! 12 ♗xc4 (12 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 13 ♗e4 f5!) 12...b6 13 0-0 ♗b7 14 e4 c5.

This is a very comfortable version of both Semi-Tarrasch and Queen's Indian-type positions. Although Black lost a tempo with ...c7-c6-c5, White lost two himself with ♗f1-d3xc4 and e2-e3-e4. Moreover, the white queen is badly placed on c2 and will be forced to move once a black rook comes to c8.

Question 20. Can't White play 11 ♕xc3?

Answer 20. Then 11...dxc4 12 ♗xc4 b6 13 0-0 ♗b7 compares favourably with the Lasker line 6...h6 7 ♗h4 ♘e4 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 ♕c2 ♘xc3 10 ♕xc3 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 b6 12 0-0 ♗b7.

Question 21. Why is that?

Answer 21. White cannot prevent Black from achieving ...c7-c5. Consequently, in order to fight for an advantage, he played 13 ♗e2 c5 14 dxc5 ♖c8 15 b4 bxc5 16 b5 followed by a2-a4 hoping to exploit the weakness of the c5-pawn and to create a

passed pawn on the queenside. In this case, the white rook is of more value on a1 than c1; consequently, Black's tempo ...♘b8-d7 (supporting ...c6-c5) is much more useful than White's ♖a1-c1 (which does not manage to prevent ...c6-c5).

9 ♗f4!

This is the most annoying move for Black to face. White refuses to fall in with his opponent's drive for exchanges and forces Black to seek another development scheme.

9...f5

This is Black's best option, consolidating the central space he gained with ...♘f6-e4. If he cannot free his position with multiple exchanges, then he must give his pieces more room to breathe. However, White has a very good set-up against this Stonewall Dutch formation (the bishop is excellent on f4) and maintains a slight advantage, although he eventually went astray in this game and lost.

10 h3 ♘df6 11 ♗d3 ♗d7 12 0-0 ♗e8 13 ♘e5 ♘d7 14 f3 ♘xe5 15 ♗xe5 ♘xc3 16 bxc3 ♗d6 17 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 18 ♕b3 ♕e7 19 ♖fe1 ♔h8 20 ♗f1 g5 21 ♖b1 b6 22 ♕b4 ♕f6 23 ♗d3 ♖d8 24 ♖f1 ♖g8 25 cxd5 exd5 26 ♖be1 ♗g6 27 ♕b1 c5 28 ♔h1 ♖de8 29 ♕b5 ♕e7 30 ♕c6 c4 31 ♗b1 ♕e6 32 ♕c7 f4 33 ♗xg6 ♕xg6 34 ♕xa7 fxe3 35 ♖e2 h5 36 ♖fe1 g4 37 fxg4 hxg4 38 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 39 ♖xe3 ♕g5 40 ♖g3 ♕f4 41 ♕xb6 ♖b8 42 ♕xb8+ ♕xb8 43 ♖xg4 ♔h7 44 a4 ♕b3 45 ♖g3 ♕xa4 46 ♖f3 ♕d1+ 47 ♔h2 ♕e1 48 ♖g3 ♔h6 49 ♖f3 ♔g5 50 ♖g3+ ♔h4 51 ♖g4+ ♔h5 52 ♖g3 ♕c1 53 ♖f3 ♔h4 54 g3+ ♔h5 55 h4 ♕d1 56 ♖f5+ ♔g6 57 ♖f2 ♕d3 0-1

This is the best way to meet attempts to transpose into Lasker systems. It also applies in the 8 a3 variation: after 8...♘e4, White's best reply is 9 ♗f4!

Question 22. What if Black plays 8...h6 first to strengthen ...♘f6-e4?

Answer 22. For both 8 ♕c2 and 8 a3 as for 8 ♗d3, the answer is again the same: 9 ♗f4! The typical 9...a6 to expand on the queenside with ...d5xc4 and ...b7-b5 is met by 10 c5! as with the bishop on f4, Black does not have the freeing break 10...e5.

Question 23. Can't Black do anything else than 8...♘e4 or 8...h6?

Answer 23. Now it gets complicated! A crucial point is that this was the last time that Black was guaranteed to get in the freeing move ...♘f6-e4. Once White plays both ♕d1-c2 and a2-a3, ...♘f6-e4 is no longer possible as after ♗g5xe7 ...♕d8xe7, ♘c3xe4 ...d5xe4, ♕c2xe4, the pawn on a3 prevents ...♕e7-b4+. After 8 a3 therefore, the positional threat is 9 ♕c2, and vice versa.

If Black is not going to play ...♘f6-e4, then he must wait, and aim instead to win 'the fight for the tempo'

Question 24. You mean, wait for White to move his light-squared bishop and then take on c4.

Answer 24. Right! Of course, Black must have a follow-up to ...d5xc4 ready, and for this purpose he has the waiting move ...a7-a6.

Question 25. What does it do?

Answer 25. The move ...a7-a6 takes control of b5; consequently, Black is primed for rapid queenside expansion with ...d5xc4 and then ...b7-b5 and ...c6-c5. This achieves all of Black's aims: he attacks White's centre and frees b7 for his light-squared bishop, while opening the a8-h1 diagonal.

Black's other waiting move is the consolidating ...♖f8-e8. This has little active value but it is useful: the rook will support a future ...e6-e5, it protects whichever black piece comes to e7 and it frees f8 for the black knight on d7 in case the black kingside needs some extra support.

Question 26. So who will win the 'fight for the tempo'?

Answer 26. To let you into a secret, only White can! Since he has more space, he inevitably has more useful waiting moves.

Question 27. So why is Black bothering?

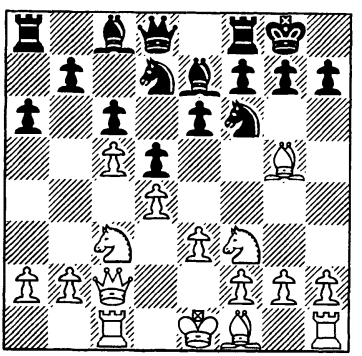
Answer 27. The game has paused for a moment as both sides 'stop and listen' before proceeding further. Black's contention is that moves such as ...a7-a6 benefit him more than a2-a3 or h2-h3 does White, and that these differences are enough to even up the game. Black may ultimately lose the 'fight for the tempo', but in the course of this skirmish, certain details will have arisen which will help him in the overall battle.

Game 14
Rivas Pastor-Toth
Rome 1984

1 c4 e6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1 c6 8 ♕c2 a6

If Black wishes to wait, it is safest to play this active move first, so that he is ready to start his counterplay 'sequence' ...d5xc4, ...b7-b5 and ...c6-c5 at a moment's notice. For example, 8...♖e8 is nicely met by 9 ♗d3 as after 9...dxc4 (9...a6!? 10 ♘e5!?; 10 a4!?) 10 ♗xc4 ♘d5 11 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 12 ♘e4 ♘5f6 (12...b6!?) 13 ♘g3 e5 14 0-0 exd4 15 ♘f5 ♕d8 16 ♘3xd4 ♘e5 17 ♗b3 ♗xf5 18 ♘xf5, it can be seen that the inclusion of the moves ♕d1-c2 and ...♖f8-e8 clearly favours White.

9 c5!?



This ambitious move seeks to exert a 'big clamp' on Black's position. However, whereas c4-c5 prevents one of Black's central breaks, it creates the opportunity for the other. The alternatives 9 cxd5 and 9 a3 are seen in Games 15 and 16 respectively.

9...e5!

This would also be the answer to 8 a3 a6 9 c5, when 9...e5 10 dxe5 ♘e4! 11 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 12 ♘xe4 dxe4 13 ♘d2 ♘xc5 14 ♕c2 ♘d3+! is fine for Black.

10 dxe5 ♘e8

10...♘g4 11 ♗f4! is Polugayevsky's suggestion. Then 11...♘xc5 12 h3 ♘h6 13 ♗xh6 gxh6 looks disgusting for Black at first sight, though I don't think it's as bad as it looks: Black intends ...f7-f6 to remove the strong e5-pawn and he has the two bishops and a strong centre.

11 ♗xe7

Perhaps 11 h4!? h6 (11...♘xc5 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 ♘xd5! wins) 12 b4!? hxg5 13 hxg5 g6 14 e6!? or 14 ♗d3!? is worth considering.

11...♕xe7 12 ♗d3 h6 13 0-0 ♘xe5 14 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 15 e4 ♘f6 16 f4

Here White should instead play 16 exd5, as in the note to White's 11th move in Game 17.

16...♕d4+ 17 ♔h1 dxe4 18 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 19 ♗xe4 ♖e8 20 ♗f3 ♕f6 21 ♕b3 ♖e7 22 ♕b6 ♗e6 23 b3 g6 24 ♖cd1 ♔g7 25 ♕b4 ♖ae8 26 ♔g1 ♗f5 27 ♕d4 ♖e3 28 ♕xf6+ ♔xf6 29 ♖d6+ ♖8e6 30 ♖xe6+ ♗xe6 31 ♖c1 ♖d3 32 ♖c2 ♔f5 33 ♗e2 ♖d4 34 g3 ♔e4 35 ♔f2 ♗d5 36 ♖c3 ♖d2 37 a3 ♖b2 38 b4 ♔f5 39 ♖e3 ♗c4 40 ♖e5+ ♔f6 41 ♔f3 ♖b3+ 42 ♖e3 ♗xe2+ 43 ♔xe2 ♖b2+ 44 ♔f3 ♖xh2 45 ♖e8 ♖a2 46 ♖b8 ♖xa3+ 47 ♔f2 a5 48 ♖xb7 axb4 49 ♖xb4 ♖c3 0-1

Question 28. You are putting 8 a3 and 8 ♕c2 together as if they were the same thing. Is that really true?

Answer 28. If White is intent on a waiting plan, then there is no difference between them. However 8 ♕c2 is more flexible than 8 a3 as it allows him a number of independent possibilities.

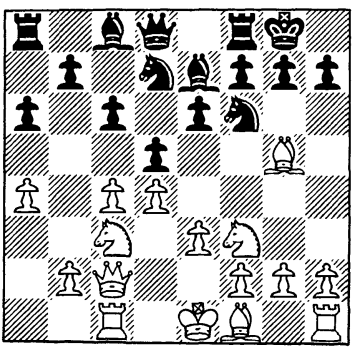
Game 15
Alekhine-Capablanca
Buenos Aires (2nd matchgame) 1927

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♗g5 ♗e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♘f3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1 c6 8 ♕c2 a6 9 cxd5

White aims to transpose into a favourable version of the Exchange variation. Of course, for this purpose, 8 ♕c2 is more useful than 8 a3.

Another interesting idea of Alekhine's is 9 a4!?

Question 29. This looks weird!



Answer 29. With 8...a6, Black primes himself for rapid queenside expansion with ...d5xc4, ...b7-b5 and ...c6-c5. White's idea is that after ...d5xc4, ♗f1xc4 ...b7-b5, ♗c4-d3 White's pressure on b5 prevents Black from playing the freeing ...c6-c5.

Alekhine-Rubinstein, Carlsbad 1923, saw a typical and interesting positional idea: 9...♖e8 10 ♗d3 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♘d5 12 ♗f4!? ♘xf4 13 exf4 (White's doubled pawns clamp down on Black's position) 13...c5 14 dxc5 ♕c7 15 0-0 ♕xf4 16 ♘e4 ♘xc5 17 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 18 ♗d3! b6 19 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 20 ♗e4 ♖a7 21 b4! with a clear advantage for White. Instead of 9...♖e8, 9...♘e4! is an untested suggestion of Alekhine's.

9...♘xd5!?

9...exd5 transposes into a type of position similar to the Rubinstein-Takacs game in the ♘f3 Exchange variation chapter (Game 76).

10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 ♗e2 ♖e8 12 0-0 ♘xc3 13 ♕xc3 e5 14 ♖fd1 exd4

14...e4! 15 ♘d2 ♘f6 (Rubinstein) is less accommodating, though White is slightly better in this typical position.

15 ♘xd4 ♘f6 16 ♗f3 ♗g4 17 ♗xg4 ♘xg4 18 ♘f5 ♕f6 19 ♕xf6 ♘xf6 ½-½

Alekhine claims a slight edge for White with 20 ♘d6 ♖e7 21 e4.

Finally, we examine White's most consistent idea: to continue the fight for the tempo with 9 a3.

Question 30. Is this White's best?

Answer 30. I don't think so. My feeling is that Black's waiting moves are far more relevant than White's: they connect with Black's positional ideas whereas White's are just froth, topping up his position without adding anything concrete.

Game 16
Pirc-Tylor
Hastings 1932/33

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♗g5 ♘bd7 5 e3 ♗e7 6 ♘c3 0-0 7 ♖c1 c6 8 ♕c2 a6 9 a3 h6

Question 31. Hey, I thought that this just allowed 10 ♗f4!

Answer 31. I agree! In my opinion, 9...h6 is an inaccurate move order. After 10 ♗f4, White threatens 11 c5 so Black must immediately play 10...dxc4 11 ♗xc4 b5 12 ♗a2 c5. In comparison with the game, for example, White denies his opponent the opportunity to play the useful ...♖f8-e8. Instead 9...♖e8 10 h3!? (10 ♗d3 h6 11 ♗xf6!? is interesting) 10...h6 (a useful move later, when White develops pressure on the b1-h7 diagonal) to meet 11 ♗f4 with 11...dxc4 12 ♗xc4 b5 13 ♗a2 ♗b7 (13...c5!?) followed by ...c6-c5 is the most accurate move order. Black should always be ready to meet ♗g5-f4 with ...d5xc4, otherwise White

can employ the 'clamp' with c4-c5. After 14 0-0 c5 15 dxc5 ♘xc5 16 ♖fd1 ♕b6 17 ♗e5 ♖ac8 18 ♕e2 ♘ce4 19 ♗d4 ♗c5 20 ♘xe4 ♗xd4! 21 ♘xd4 ♗xe4, the position was equal in Alekhine-Capablanca, World Championship 1927.

10 ♗h4!?

10 cxd5!? was played in Yusupov-Van der Sterren, Amsterdam 1982, aiming for 10...hxg5 11 dxe6 fxe6 12 ♘xg5 with interesting play for the piece. With the text, White utilises the fact that ...♘f6-e4 is not possible to keep the bishop on the h4-d8 diagonal.

10...♖e8 11 ♗d3!?

11 h3 is possible when 11...dxc4 leads to the same position, but with a useful extra h2-h3 for White. 11 ♗g3 is the alternative, when 11...dxc4 12 ♗xc4 b5 13 ♗a2 c5 14 dxc5 ♘xc5 15 ♖d1 ♕b6 16 b4 ♘cd7 17 ♖d1 is assessed by Polugayevsky as slightly better for White. Simply 17...a5 looks nice for Black however.

11...dxc4 12 ♗xc4 b5 13 ♗a2 c5 14 dxc5

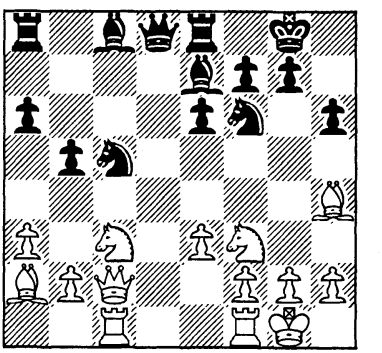
I would normally prefer to take my chances in the IQP; although 14 0-0 cxd4 15 exd4 ♗b7 is supposed to be comfortable for Black, there is always life in White's position: 16 ♘e5 ♕b6!? and now White has two choices: 17 ♗b1!? (17 ♖fd1 ♘xe5 18 dxe5 ♕c6! [Alekhine] 19 f3 and now 19...♕c5+ wins a pawn) 17...♕xd4 (risky! 17...♘f8 is the safer option) 18 ♘xd7 ♕xh4 19 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 20 ♕h7+ ♔f8 21 ♘d5! (threatening ♕h7-h8+ mate) 21...♗xd5 22 ♖c7 looks decisive for White, but Black has the amazing resource 22...♕xh2+!! (Fritz, of course!) 23 ♔xh2 ♗e5+ followed by 24...♗xc7 with defensive chances. Note that if White had played 11 h3 instead of 11 ♗d3, Black would be lost here as ...♕h4xh2+!! would be impossible! The other idea is 17 ♖fe1 as the pawn grab 17...♕xd4 18 ♘xf7 (18 ♗xf6!? when both 18...♗xf6 and 18...♘xf6 are met by 19 ♘xf7!) 18...♕xh4 (18...♔xf7 19 ♗xe6+ ♔f8 20 ♕g6 mates) 19 ♖xe6 (19 ♗xe6 is met not by 19...♔f8 20 ♘h8!, but by 19...♗c5! which seems good for Black) looks extremely awkward for Black: so many discovered checks are coming! Again, this is even better with an extra h2-h3.

14...♘xc5!

The knight annoyingly eyes the d3-square. 14...♗xc5 15 0-0 ♗b7 16 ♖fd1 ♕b6 led to a brilliant attack in Pirc-Steiner, Prague Olympiad 1931: 17 ♗b1 ♗d6 18 ♖xd6! ♕xd6 19 ♖d1 ♕c7 20 ♖xd7! ♕xd7 21 ♘e5 ♕d8 22 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 23 ♕h7+ ♔f8 24 ♘d7+! winning the queen.

15 0-0

15 ♗b1 prevents ...♕d8-d3, but after 15...♗b7, Black has nothing to fear. 16 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 17 ♕h7+ ♔f8 leads nowhere.



15...♗b7?

An important mistake. 15...♕d3!, as in Green-Reinfeld, USA Championship, New York 1940, equalises: 16 ♖fd1 ♕xc2 17 ♖xc2 ♗b7 18 ♘e5 ♖ad8 19 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 20 f3 ♔f8 21 e4 ♘d3 22 ♘xd3 ♖xd3.

16 ♖fd1 ♕b6 17 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 18 b4!

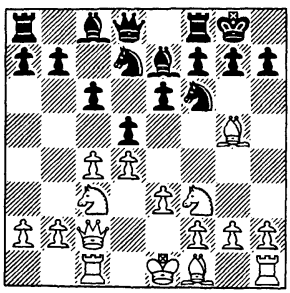
Suddenly, the knight on c5 is embarrassed.

18...♗xf3 19 gxf3 ♘b7 20 ♗b1 ♘d6 21 ♕h7+ ♔f8 22 ♘e4 ♖ad8 23 ♘xf6 gxf6 24 ♕xh6+ ♔e7 25 ♕h4 ♘c4 26 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 27 ♕f4 e5 28 ♕e4 ♘d2 29 ♕f5 ♘c4 30 ♖c3 ♖d1+ 31 ♔g2 ♕d8 32 ♗d3 ♘d6 33 ♕g4 ♖d2 34 h4 ♕b6 35 ♗f1 f5 36 ♕g7 ♔e6 37 ♖c5 1-0

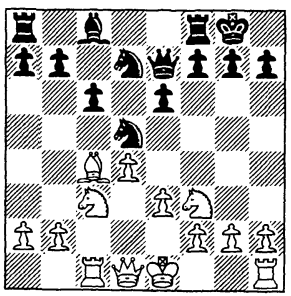
Summary
Against the Orthodox variation, 7 ♖c1 is White's best choice in my opinion. In the old main line with 7...c6, 8 ♗d3 followed by 11 0-0 as in Game 10 seems to promise White a small, pleasant advantage, though as always Black's position remains sound.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1 c6

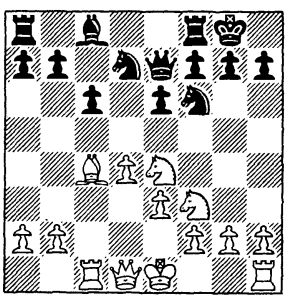
8 ♗d3
8 ♕c2 *(D)*
8...♘e4 – *Game 13*
8...a6
9 c5 – *Game 14*
9 cxd5 – *Game 15*
9 a3 – *Game 16*
8...dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♘d5 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 *(D)* **11 0-0**
11 ♘e4 ♘5f6 *(D)*
12 ♘g3 – *Game 11*
12 ♘xf6+ – *Game 12*
11...♘xc3 12 ♖xc3 – *Game 10*



8 ♕c2

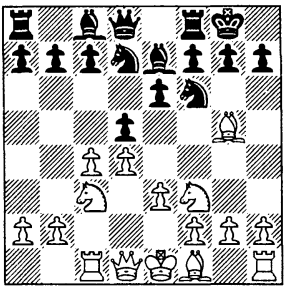


10...♕xe7



11...♘5f6

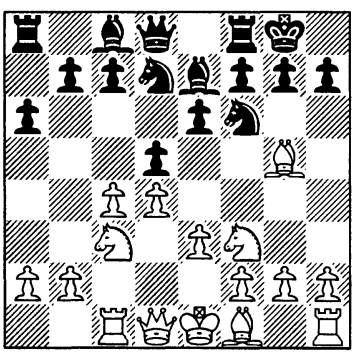
CHAPTER THREE



Orthodox Variation (6...♘bd7): Other Systems after 7 ♖c1

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1

In this chapter we shall consider some other possibilities for Black after 7 ♖c1, starting with a 'QGA-type' approach. The 'QGA-type' systems are characterised by the move ...a7-a6, played either immediately or after a prior ...d5xc4 (see Games 21 and 22). We shall begin with 7...a6.



Question 1. This looks subtle!

Answer 1. Black's general aims as always are to activate his light-squared bishop and to create counterplay against the white centre. The advance ...a7-a6 is a preparatory move to ensure that once Black launches his queenside play, it flows quickly and proceeds without delay.

Question 2. And how does Black launch his counterplay?

Answer 2. Black will play ...d5xc4 and then follow up with ...b7-b5 and ...c7-c5.

Question 3. How does this solve all Black's problems?

Answer 3. First of all, the combination of ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5 frees b7 for the light-squared bishop; secondly ...d5xc4 clears the a8-h1 diagonal of pawns, giving the bishop on b7 a clear run of the diagonal; and thirdly, Black strikes at the white centre with ...c7-c5. In this way, instead of solving his space problems by exchanges, Black solves them by gaining queenside space.

Question 4. Why do you call them 'QGA-type' systems?

Answer 4. This approach to Black's problems lies at the heart of the Queen's Gambit Accepted. You only have to see the line 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♕e2 b5 8 ♗b3 ♗b7 to understand! Incidentally, this line also has parallels with the Nimzo-Indian. The Russian Grandmaster Kharitonov is an expert in the 7...a6 lines, and his favourite system against the Rubinstein Nimzo-Indian is 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e3 0-0 5 ♗d3 d5 6 ♘f3 c5 7 0-0 dxc4 8 ♗xc4 cxd4 9 exd4 a6!? intending ...b7-b5 and ...♗c8-b7!

Question 5. Any drawbacks?

Answer 5. 7...a6 pursues Black's interests without attending to White's. Thus with 7...a6, Black does nothing to counter the c-file pressure that White developed with 7 ♖c1. Consequently, White may force transposition to an Exchange variation with 8 cxd5 exd5 (8...♘xd5 9 ♘xd5 exd5 [9...♗xg5 10 ♘xc7 ♖a7 11 d5! is good for White] 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 ♖xc7 loses the c-pawn) 9 ♗d3 c6.

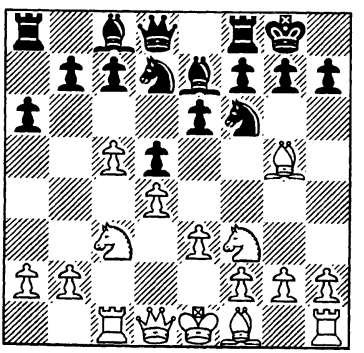
Question 6. Why would White want to do that?

Answer 6. White's contention is that the inclusion of ♖a1-c1 and ...a7-a6 over a normal QGD Exchange is significantly in his favour. These types of positions are discussed in the Rubinstein-Takacs game in the Exchange variation chapter.

The second drawback is seen in the following game.

Game 17
Epishin-Ziatdinov
World Open, Philadelphia 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1 a6 8 c5!?



Question 7. What is the point of 8 c5?

Answer 7. The c4-c5 advance is an extremely ambitious positional idea that cuts out all of Black's queenside plans, forcing Black to search elsewhere in order to obtain active play.

Question 8. How does it stop Black's plans?

Answer 8. Black was relying on the sequence ...d5xc4 followed by ...b7-b5 and ...c7-c5 to find a post for his light-squared bishop and to gain space on the queenside. After 8 c5, while White increases his command of queenside space, Black can neither play ...d5xc4 nor strike at White's centre with ...c7-c5.

Question 9. Can't Black just strike back with 8...e5?

Answer 9. Here we see another drawback of 7...a6 compared to 7...c6. 7...a6 does not add protection to the d5-pawn, and thus does nothing to consolidate Black's centre. Consequently, 8 c5 e5 9 dxe5 costs Black his d5-pawn. Before he can play ...e6-e5, Black must reinforce his centre.

The alternative 8 b3 is seen in Game 20.

8...c6

Question 10. Wait a minute! Haven't I seen this position before?

Answer 10. Nearly! 9 ♕c2 or 9 a3 would transpose into 7...c6 8 ♕c2/8 a3 a6 9 c5. In this move order, however, White can play a more useful move than either ♕d1-c2 or a2-a3.

Instead 8...♘e4 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 10 ♘xe4! dxe4 11 ♘d2 ♘f6 (11...f5 12 c6! breaks up Black's queenside) 12 ♘c4! (preventing ...e6-e5) was very pleasant for White in Karpov-Jakobsen, Malta Olympiad 1980.

9 ♗d3!

This position can also be reached via 7...c6 8 ♗d3 a6!? 9 c5.

Question 11. I don't understand. If ...e6-e5 is coming, isn't 9 b4 better to hold the c5-pawn after d4xe5?

Answer 11. This was also my first reaction: it is natural to wish to maintain the structure that seems to suffocate Black's position. However, White's slow development offers Black an unusual way to create counterplay and solve his opening problems: 9...a5 10 a3 axb4! (White now regrets ♖a1-c1 which

allows Black to take over the a-file) 11 axb4 b6! 12 ♗f4 (to prevent ...e6-e5; 12 ♗d3 bxc5 13 bxc5 e5! 14 dxe5 ♘e8 leads to the main game, except that the exchange of all the queenside pawns increases the activity of Black's pieces enormously) 12...bxc5 13 bxc5 ♖a3! (threatening 14...♖xc3 15 ♖xc3 ♕a5 16 ♕d2 ♘e4! winning) 14 ♕d2 ♕a5 15 ♗e2 ♗a6! (Polugayevsky) when Black exchanges his light-squared bishop while at the same time developing queenside counterplay!

Question 12. 9 ♗d3 is better?

Answer 12. First of all, White activates his last minor piece and prepares to castle his king to safety; secondly, White confiscates more central territory by stopping ...♘f6-e4.

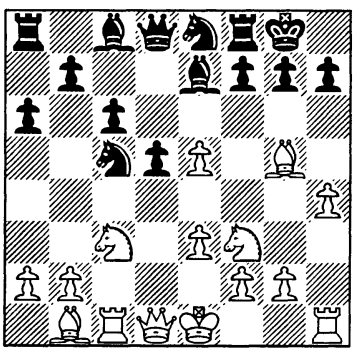
9...e5

The break-out! This is Black's most aggressive attempt. The other move, 9...b6, is seen in Game 19.

10 dxe5 ♘e8 11 h4!?

The quieter 11 ♗xe7 seems to promise an edge for White: 11...♕xe7 12 ♕c2 h6 13 e4! ♘xe5 14 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 15 0-0, as in Kotronias-Goldin, Sochi 1989, was very pleasant for White after 15...♘f6 16 exd5 ♘g4! (16...♘xd5 17 ♖fe1 ♕h5 18 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 19 ♗c4 is clearly better for White according to Ftacnik) 17 g3 ♕h5 18 h4 cxd5 19 ♕e2 ♗e6 20 ♕f3 ♖ad8 21 ♘e2, so Ftacnik suggests 18...g5!? 19 ♘e4 f5 to stir up some counterplay.

11...♘xc5 12 ♗b1



Question 13. This looks like a very aggressive plan! What is the basis for it?

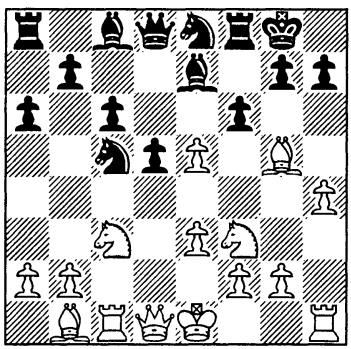
Answer 13. First of all, activity. While Black still has to find active posts for the rook on a8, the bishop on c8 and the knight on e8, all of White's pieces combine against Black's position. For example, White's current threat is 13 ♘xd5! cxd5 14 ♖xc5! winning a pawn.

Secondly, Black's kingside weakness. 10 dxe5 performed the key function of depriving Black's king's knight of its excellent defensive post on f6.

Question 14. So what?

Answer 14. This inevitably weakens Black's defence of h7, a square for which White is perfectly placed to attack: White can set up a battery on the b1-h7 diagonal with ♕d1-c2, while the pawn on h4, knight on f3, rook on h1 structure gives rise to many 'Greek gift' combinations starting with ♗g5xe7, ♗b1xh7+ and ♘f3-g5+.

12...f6



Black's most logical continuation, ridding himself of one of White's most dangerous attacking units: the e5-pawn. However, it loosens the pawn cover around the black king, particularly along the b1-h7 diagonal. The alternative 12...♘e6 is the subject of the next main game.

13 ♕c2! g6

Forced.

14 ♗h6! ♗f5

14...♘g7 15 h5 ♗f5 16 ♕e2 ♗xb1 17 ♖xb1 transposes to the game.

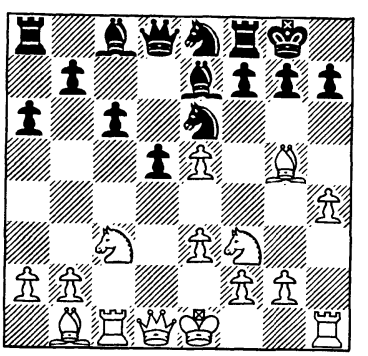
15 ♕e2 ♗xb1 16 ♖xb1 ♘g7 17 h5 f5?!

Ageichenko-Gavrilov, Moscow 1989, continued instead 17...♕e8 18 ♖h3!? (18 hxg6 ♕xg6!?, intending ...♘c5-d3+, would have offered Black some counterplay. The text intends 19 hxg6 ♕xg6 20 ♗xg7!; 18 ♖d1 intending ♖d1-d4 is another interesting idea.) 18...fxe5 19 hxg6 hxg6 20 ♘xe5 ♗f6 21 ♘f3 (21 ♘g4!?) 21...♘e4 22 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 23 ♖d1 with unclear play. The game continuation is much worse as it leaves White with his strong e5-pawn.

18 hxg6 hxg6 19 ♘d4 ♕d7 20 f4 ♖f7 21 g4! fxg4 22 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 23 b4 ♘e6 24 ♕xg4 ♘f8 25 ♕xd7 ♘xd7 26 ♔f2 ♘f8 27 a4 ♖d8 28 a5 ♖h7 29 ♖xh7 ♔xh7 30 ♘a4 ♘d7 31 ♘e6 ♖b8 32 ♔e2 ♔g8 33 ♘ac5 ♘f8 34 ♘d4 ♔f7 35 ♖h1 ♖c8 36 ♔f3 ♖c7 37 ♔g4 ♔g8 38 ♖h2 ♔f7 39 ♖h1 ♔g8 40 ♘de6 ♖c8 41 ♖h6 ♘xe6 42 ♘xe6 ♗xb4 43 ♖xg6+ ♔f7 44 f5 ♗f8 45 ♘xf8 ♔xf8 46 e6 1-0

Game 18
Romanishin-Ehlvest
Biel SKA 1996

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1 c6 8 ♗d3 a6 9 c5 e5 10 dxe5 ♘e8 11 h4 ♘xc5 12 ♗b1 ♘e6!?



I don't like this move. Although it anticipates White's threat of 13 ♘xd5, and keeps Black's kingside solid, 12...♘e6 cramps Black's set-up and pulls back the one black piece that succeeded in interfering with White's ideas.

13 ♕c2!

The ineffective 13 ♘d4 g6 14 ♗h6 ♘8g7 15 h5 ♗g5 16 hxg6 hxg6 17 ♗xg5 ♕xg5 18 ♘f3 was agreed drawn in Korchnoi-Agdestein, Tilburg 1989.

13...♘xg5?!

This is really asking for it! 13...g6 14 ♗h6 ♘6g7 (14...♘8g7 15 h5 ♕a5+ 16 ♕d2 ♖d8 is recommended by Kharitonov, but something like 16 ♔f1 looks very appealing for White) 15 h5 ♗f5 16 e4 dxe4 17 ♘xe4 ♕a5+ 18 ♗d2 ♕d5 19 hxg6 ♗xg6 20 ♗c3 ♘c7 21 ♖d1 ♕e6 22 ♘d4 led to an advantage for White in Izeta-Sulskis, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

14 ♘xg5 g6 15 ♘xh7 ♔xh7

15...♗f5 16 e4 ♗xe4 17 ♘xe4 ♔xh7 18 h5 dxe4 19 hxg6+ followed by 20 ♕xe4 is very powerful according to Petursson.

16 h5 ♔g7?

The decisive mistake according to Petursson, who suggests that 16...f5! was the only way to keep going. For example, 17 exf6 (17 hxg6+ ♔xg6! 18 ♘e2 [18 ♕e2 ♘g7 19 g4!? looks very dangerous for Black] 18...♘g7 19 g4 ♔f7 20 ♘g3 ♔g8 holds according to Petursson) 17...♖xf6! 18 hxg6+ ♔g8 when it is not easy for White to bring his queen into the act, e.g. 19 ♕e2 ♘g7.

17 hxg6 f5 18 ♕e2! ♗h4 19 g3 ♖h8 20 gxh4 ♖xh4 21 ♕f3 ♘c7 22 ♔e2 ♘e6 23 ♖xh4 ♕xh4 24 ♖h1 1-0

Black can also attack his opponent's bind with c4-c5 in a different way.

Game 19
Eingorn-Balashov
Riga 1985

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♗g5 ♗e7

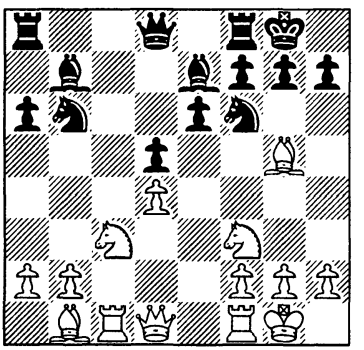
5 ♘c3 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1 a6 8 c5 c6 9 ♗d3 b6 10 cxb6!

10 b4 a5 11 b5 ♗b7 12 bxc6 ♗xc6 13 cxb6 ♕xb6 14 ♘e5 offered White a small edge in Vaganian-Anikaev, USSR 1979, but the text is better.

10...c5

Black plays the ...c6-c5 break while he can. The routine 10...♕xb6 11 0-0! ♕xb2 12 ♘a4 ♕b7 13 ♘e5 c5 14 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 15 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 16 ♗xf6 gxf6 17 ♕g4+ ♔h8 18 ♕h4 f5 19 ♕f6+ followed by d4xc5 gave White a huge initiative in Hort-Portisch, Madrid 1973.

11 0-0 ♗b7 12 ♗b1! cxd4 13 exd4 ♘xb6



Question 15. This just looks nice for Black!

Answer 15. Although Black's position is optically attractive, he has difficulty finding an active plan.

Question 16. What do you mean?

Answer 16. Create a normal IQP position by moving the black pawn from d5 to b5. The benefits are obvious: Black's light-squared bishop on b7 has an open diagonal and Black can use the semi-open d-file to attack the IQP. With the pawn on d5, Black's position is too rigid: White's centre is impervious to attack which gives him a free hand to pursue his interests on the wings.

14 ♘e5

With the future idea of f2-f4-f5.

14...♘fd7

The alternative 14...♖c8 15 ♖e1 ♘bd7 16 ♕b3 ♗a8 17 ♕a4 ♖b8 18 ♖e2 was more pleasant for White in Gavrikov-Balashov, USSR Championship 1985.

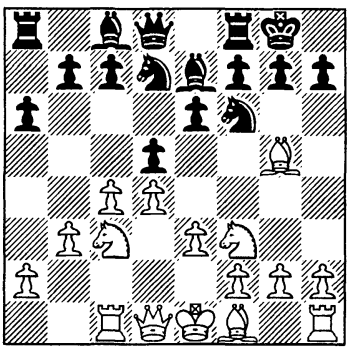
15 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 16 ♘a4 ♖ab8 17 ♖c7

17 ♘xb6 ♘xb6 18 ♖c3! was even stronger according to Polugayevsky.

17...♕d6 18 ♘xb6 ♘xe5 19 ♕c2 g6 20 ♕c5 ♘c4 21 ♘d7 ♖fc8 22 ♘f6+ ♔f8 23 ♖xb7 ♖xc5 24 dxc5 ♕f4 25 ♘d7+ ♔g7 26 ♘xb8 ♘d2 27 ♖d1 ♕c4 28 c6 d4 29 c7 ♘xb1 30 ♘xa6 d3 31 ♖b8 ♕c2 32 ♖f1 d2 33 ♖d8 1-0

Game 20
Zviaginsev-Kharitonov
Russia 1995

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1 a6 8 b3!?



With this move, rather than try to refute 7...a6, White seeks to prevent his opponent from implementing his plan without undertaking any positional commitments. 8 a4 preventing ...b7-b5 after ...d5xc4 is a similar idea.

Question 17. Doesn't this just weaken the b4-square?

Answer 17. It is always annoying to concede a square in your territory like b4. However, it is really an aesthetic complaint rather than a real problem: what can Black do with this square? Meanwhile, ...a7-a6 also

has drawbacks: it weakens the queenside dark squares, giving White the positional option of a2-a4-a5, tying down the black pawns on a6, b7 and c6.

Question 18. How should Black react?

Answer 18. The standard response is to play 8...dxc4 9 ♗xc4 c5, transposing back into the 7...dxc4 8 ♗xc4 a6 9 a4 c5 line, but having avoided Zviaginsev's 9 ♗d3!? idea. Black could also try 8...c5 which is considered at the end of this chapter.

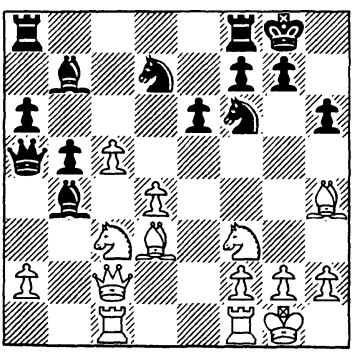
8...h6 9 ♗h4

As always, 9 ♗f4!? is interesting. I quite like White after 9...♗b4 10 ♗d3 ♘e4!? 11 ♗xe4 dxe4 12 ♘d2.

9...♗b4 10 ♗d3 c5 11 0-0 cxd4

11...♕a5 12 ♕c2 ♗a3 13 ♖b1 (13 ♖cd1 ♗b4 14 ♘b1!?, intending ♘bd2 and e3-e4 seems better) 13...♗b4 14 ♖fc1 ♗a3 is suggested by Kharitonov as an annoying line!

12 exd4 ♕a5 13 ♕c2 dxc4 14 bxc4 b5!? 15 c5! ♗b7



16 ♗e4!?

I would prefer a move like 16 ♘b1!? (or 16 ♘e2!?) leaving the dark-squared bishop hitting thin air and looking to snare it with a later a2-a3. 16...♗d5 (16...♗xf3 gives up the bishop pair and too many light squares, while there is no obvious way to exploit the weakened white kingside) 17 ♕b2!? (intending a2-a3) 17...♗xa2 18 c6 followed by ♗h4xf6 gives interesting chances.

16...♘xe4 17 ♘xe4 ♗d5

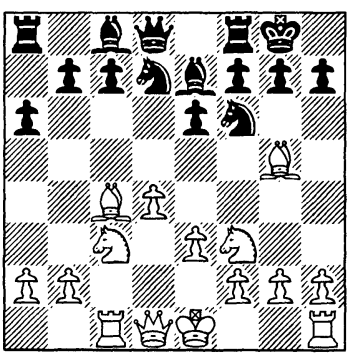
17...♗xe4!? 18 ♕xe4 ♕xa2 19 ♗e7!? ♖fe8 20 d5! ♗a3! 21 d6 ♗xc1 22 ♖xc1 ♕a3 23 ♕e3 was given as unclear by Zviaginsev, but 22...♕d5! 23 ♕xd5 exd5 24 c6 ♖xe7! 25 dxe7 ♘f6 was very good for Black in Kragely-Lazovic, Ljubljana 1996.

18 ♖b1 ♕a3 19 ♘d6 ♖fb8 20 ♗g3 a5 21 ♖b2 ♕a4! 22 ♖fb1 ♕xc2 23 ♖xc2 ♗c6 24 ♘e5 ♘xe5 25 ♗xe5 f6 26 ♗g3 ♖d8 27 f3 ♖d7 28 ♖b3 ♗d5 29 ♖e3 e5 30 ♘xb5 ♗c6 31 ♘d6 exd4 32 ♖d3 ♗c3 33 ♗f2 ♖b8 34 ♗xd4 ♖b1+ 35 ♔f2 ♗e1+ 36 ♔e2 1-0

We now turn our attention to 7...dxc4 8 ♗xc4 a6.

Game 21
Zviaginsev-Kharitonov
Russian Team Ch, Kazan 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1 dxc4 8 ♗xc4 a6



Question 19. What is the point of this move order?

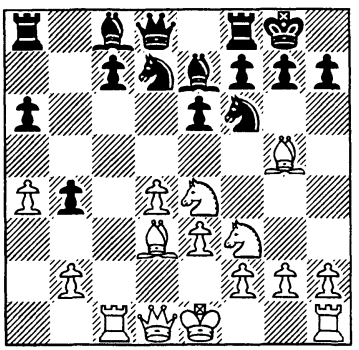
Answer 19. Black wants the advantages of the 7...a6 system without allowing White the opportunity to prevent ...d5xc4 with either 8 c5 or 8 b3. However, Black loses both the 'fight for the tempo' and a lot of his flexibility: he is now fully committed to the plan of queenside expansion.

9 ♗d3!?

Question 20. What is the point of this?

Answer 20. This move is borrowed from the QGA variation: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 (intending ...b7-b5) 7 ♗d3!? to meet 7...b5 with 8 a4!

8...a6 prepares 9...b5 and then 10...c5. Obviously the white bishop on c4 will have to move after ...b7-b5, so with 9 ♗d3, White makes the necessary move first. The point is that after 9...b5, White does not routinely castle, but instead plays 10 a4! and if 10 ...b4 then 11 ♘e4!



This prevents Black from playing ...c7-c5. If Black cannot play ...c7-c5, then he has to accept a weak backward pawn on the half-open c-file. 10...bxa4 11 ♘xa4! ♗b4+ 12 ♔e2! is the same. White's central king is quite safe as Black cannot muster a central break quickly enough to trouble him.

Question 21. I know! Can't Black play ...c7-c5 first, and then ...b7-b5 after?

Answer 21. Yes he can, and this is where the second part of Zviaginsev's plan comes in!

9...c5 10 ♘e5!

Question 22. Well?

Answer 22. With this move, White exploits his opponent's early development of the knight to d7 in two ways:

1. On d7, the knight does not pressure the IQP (as it would from c6) so White is free to move his knight from f3.

2. The knight on d7 no longer covers the c6-square so that after 10 ♘e5 b5, 11 ♘c6! gains the bishop pair with a clear advantage.

White thus prevents his opponent from achieving the freeing sequence that he envisaged when he played 7...dxc4, and he does so without giving conceding anything to Black in the form of a queenside weakness. Moreover, against passive play, White will cement his central presence with f2-f4.

10...cxd4

10...♘xe5 11 dxe5 ♘d5 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 ♘e4 is clearly better for White due to the weakness of d6, according to Curt Hansen.

11 exd4 ♘d5

Black must free his position in order to develop.

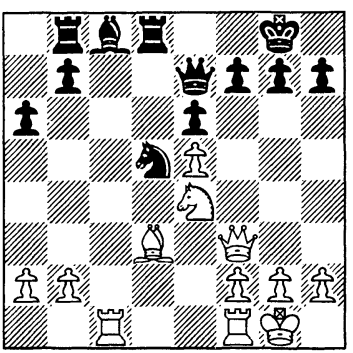
12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 0-0 ♘xe5!?

13...♘7f6 was played in Kutirov-San Segundo, European Team Championship, Pula 1997, when 14 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 15 ♗e4 ♖d8 16 ♕f3 ♘f6 17 ♖c4?! ♘xe4 18 ♕xe4 f6 19 ♘f3 b5 20 ♖c6 ♖a7 was fine for Black. 16 ♕b3 ♘f6 17 ♗f3 ♖xd4 18 ♖fd1 is an interesting pawn sacrifice, as Black is very tied up.

14 dxe5 ♖d8 15 ♕f3 ♖b8

Black even has to be careful about his king: 15...♘xc3?! is met by Curt Hansen's 16 ♖xc3 ♖b8 (intending ...♗c8-d7-c6) 17 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 18 ♕h5+ ♔g8 19 ♖h3 f6 20 exf6 ♕xf6 21 ♕h7+ ♔f7 22 ♖f3 winning.

16 ♘e4!



White has a very pleasant position.

16...♗d7 17 ♕g3 ♗c6 18 ♖fd1 h6

18...♘b4!? is an interesting idea of Curt Hansen's. After 19 ♘f6+ ♔h8 20 ♗xh7 gxf6 21 ♕h4 ♔g7 22 ♗b1 ♖xd1+ 23 ♖xd1 ♖h8 24 exf6+ ♕xf6 25 ♕xb4 ♖h4 Black has some compensation for the pawn.

19 a3!

Now Black no longer has this resource.

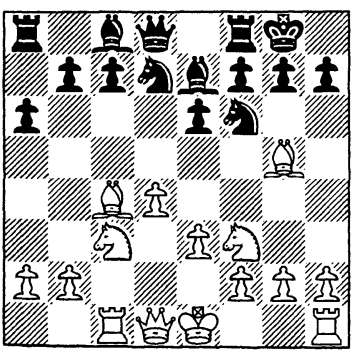
19...♘b6 20 ♘d6 ♕g5 21 ♗e4 ♕xg3 22 hxg3 ♘d5 23 ♗xd5! exd5

23...♗xd5 24 ♖c7 is very good for White.

24 ♘f5! ♔f8 25 g4 ♖bc8 26 f3 with a clear advantage to White which he subsequently converted to victory. (Sorry, the rest of the moves don't make sense!)

Game 22
Spangenberg-San Segundo
Buenos Aires 1995

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1 dxc4 8 ♗xc4 a6



9 a4

Question 23. Isn't 9 e4 possible here?

Answer 23. It is but it doesn't seem to bring anything, e.g. 9...b5 10 ♗d3 ♗b7 11 e5 ♘d5 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 14 ♖xc7 ♗xf3 15 gxf3 ♖ad8 16 0-0 ♕g5+ 17 ♔h1 ♕h4 gave Black good play for the pawn in Illescas-Garcia, Las Palmas 1989.

The text is the normal move, but it has scored extremely well for Black in practice.

9...c5

This position can also arise after 7...a6 8 a4 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 c5.

10 0-0 cxd4 11 exd4!?

11 ♕xd4 plays for a small edge due to White's lead in development. The continuation 11...♕a5 12 e4 (12 ♖fd1 b6 13 ♗f4 ♗c5 14 ♕d3 ♗b7 15 ♘d4 ♗e7 16 ♕e2 ended in a draw in Marin-Ubilava, Roses 1992) 12...♗c5 13 ♕d3 ♗b4 14 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 15 e5 ♖d8 16 ♕c2 ♗xc3 17 ♕xc3 ♕xc3 18 ♖xc3 ♘e4 19 ♖e3 ♘c5 20 a5 ♗d7 was roughly level in Izeta-San Segundo, Elgoibar 1994.

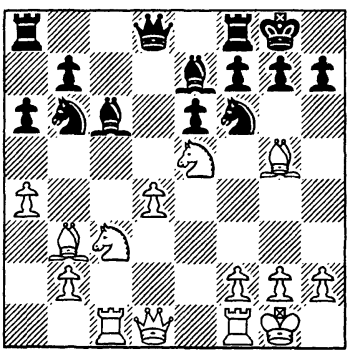
11...♘b6 12 ♗b3

The game Portisch-Chiburdanidze, Monaco (Veterans-Women) 1994, saw the interesting 12 ♗e2, which worked out well after 12...♘fd5 13 ♗d2!? ♗d7 14 a5 ♘xc3 15 bxc3 ♗a4 16 ♕e1 ♘c8 17 ♘e5 ♘d6 18 ♗d3 ♖c8 19 c4 ♗f6 20 ♕e2.

12...♗d7! 13 ♘e5

In Petursson-A.Sokolov, Reykjavik World Cup 1988, White tried 13 a5 ♘bd5 14 ♗xd5 ♘xd5 15 ♘xd5 ♗xg5 16 ♘xg5 ♕xg5 17 ♘b6 ♖ad8 18 ♖c5 ♕f6 19 ♖e1 ♗c6! with a good game for Black.

13...♗c6!



This is Black's typical idea: due to the weakness of the white queenside in the wake of the restraining move a2-a4, Black does not mind allowing ♘e5xc6 as this opens the b-file for Black to attack the white queenside

pawns.

14 ♕d3 ♘fd5!

The standard exchanging manoeuvre.

15 ♘xc6

15 ♗b1 g6 16 ♗h6 ♗g5! was fine for Black in Vescovi-Hoffman, Buenos Aires 1997.

15...bxc6 16 ♗c2 g6 17 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 18 a5 ♘b4 19 ♕e2 ♘d7 20 ♕c4 ♖fb8 21 ♗e4 ♖a7 22 ♖fe1 ♕d8 23 ♖a1 ♘f6 24 ♖ed1 ♘bd5 25 ♕e2 ♖b3 26 ♘a4 ♖b5 27 ♗xd5 cxd5 28 ♘b6 ♖c7 29 ♖d3 ♘e4 30 f3 ♘d6 31 ♖c3 ♖xc3 32 bxc3 ♘b7 33 ♕xb5 axb5 34 a6 ♕xb6 35 a7 b4 36 a8♕+ ♔g7 37 ♖b1 b3 38 ♕a3 ♘a5 39 ♕b4 ♕a6 40 ♖e1 h5 41 h4 ♔h7 42 ♔h2 ♕a7 43 ♔h3 ♕c7 44 ♖a1 ♕f4! 45 ♖xa5 g5 46 g3 g4+ 47 fxg4 hxg4+ 48 ♔h2 ♕f2+ 49 ♔h1 ♕f1+ 50 ♔h2 ♕h3+ 51 ♔g1 ♕xg3+ 52 ♔f1 ♕f3+ 53 ♔e1 g3 0-1

We now conclude our examination of 7 ♖c1 with Black's seventh move alternatives.

Question 24. I wanted to ask you two things!

Answer 24. Go ahead! First question?

Question 25. Is the move 7...h6 a good idea?

Answer 25. Interesting point! There are several points to this move:

1. As Black has not committed his c-pawn to c6, 8 ♗f4 can be met by 8...c5!? with unexplored play in a weird sort of ♗f4 system.

2. After 8 ♗h4 c6 9 ♗d3, Black plays 9...♘e4!? (not 9...dxc4 10 ♗xc4 ♘d5 as 11 ♗g3! is annoying for Black) when 10 ♗xe7 (10 ♗g3!?) 10...♘xc3! 11 ♖xc3 ♕xe7 12 cxd5 leads to P.Nikolic-Yusupov in the Lasker hybrids section of Chapter 1, while 11 bxc3 ♕xe7 12 cxd5! ♕xe7 13 c4 also gives White a slight edge.

Question 26. So what is interesting about that?

Answer 26. If White does not play ♗f1-d3 systems and wants to win the fight for the tempo, he might play 9 ♕c2, when 9...♘e4! 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 ♗d3 ♘xc3 12 ♕xc3 dxc4 13 ♗xc4 b6 14 0-0 ♗b7 gives Black an excellent version of a Lasker variation. We analysed this position in the note to White's eighth move in Pinter-Prandstetter, but without the useful ...h7-h6 for Black! It also transposes to I.Sokolov-Timman, Yerevan Olympiad 1996, when 15 ♖fd1 c5 16 dxc5 ♘xc5 17 ♕e5 ♖ac8 18 b4 ♘d7 19 ♕f4 ♖fd8 20 h3 ♘f6 gave Black comfortable equality. This is yet another move order with which to confuse your opponents!

Question 27. Okay, well how about the immediate 7...c5. Is it tactically bad?

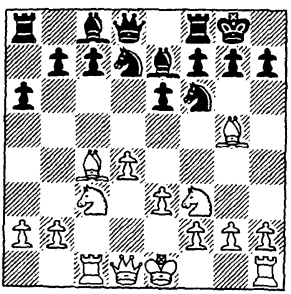
Answer 27. 7...c5 is a very natural move, but it is virtually never played! 8 dxc5 seems a natural reply, meeting 8...dxc4 (8...♘xc5 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11 ♘xd5 wins a pawn) with 9 c6! bxc6 10 ♗xc4 with a structural advantage. However, 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 10 ♗e2 as in Geller-Larsen, Copenhagen 1966, is the standard continuation when Black had development problems after 10...b6 11 0-0 ♗b7 12 dxc5! ♘xc5 13 b4! ♘e4 14 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 15 ♕a4 ♖c8 16 ♖fd1 ♘d5 17 b5 ♗g6 18 ♘e5!

Another try is 7...a6 and only if 8 a4 then 8...c5, as the line 9 dxc5 dxc4 10 c6 bxc6 is much less effective now that White has weakened his queenside with a2-a4. 9 cxd5 ♘xd5 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7!? (10...♘xe7 is also interesting) 11 ♘xd5 exd5 12 b3 was tried in Zlochevsky-Vukovic, Formia 1995, when 12...cxd4 13 ♘xd4 ♘f6 14 ♗e2 ♗e6 15 0-0 was a little better for White.

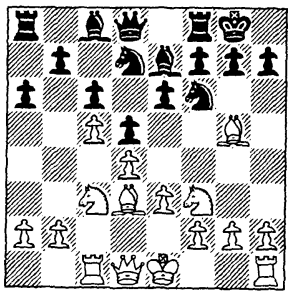
Summary
These are interesting lines with still many unexplored avenues. At the present time Zviaginsev's ideas (Games 20 and 21) seem the simplest and most promising for White.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♖c1

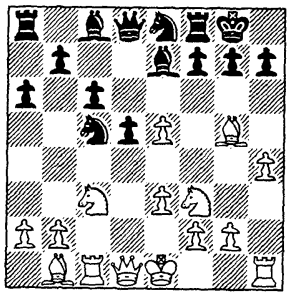
7...a6
7...dxc4 8 ♗xc4 a6 *(D)*
9 ♗d3 – *Game 21*
9 a4 – *Game 22*
8 c5
8 b3 – *Game 20*
8...c6 9 ♗d3 *(D)* **e5**
9...b6 – *Game 19*
10 dxe5 ♘e8 11 h4 ♘xc5 12 ♗b1 *(D)* **f6**
12...♘e6 – *Game 18*
13 ♕c2 – *Game 17*



8...a6

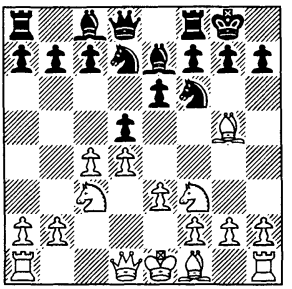


9 ♗d3



12 ♗b1

CHAPTER FOUR



Orthodox Variation (6...♘bd7): 7 ♕c2 and Other Seventh Moves

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7

In this chapter we shall consider White's alternatives to the standard 7 ♖c1 here. By far the most common of these is 7 ♕c2 (for 7 ♕b3, 7 cxd5 and 7 ♗d3 see Games 28-30 respectively).

Question 1. How does 7 ♕c2 compare with 7 ♖c1?

Answer 1. In common with 7 ♖c1, 7 ♕c2 establishes a presence on the c-file, which prevents Black from freeing his position with exchanges as 7...♘e4 fails to 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 cxd5 ♘xc3 10 ♕xc3 (here 10 dxe6 also does the trick) 10...exd5 11 ♕xc7. However, 7 ♕c2 also starts White's play along the important b1-h7 diagonal.

Question 2. Why is this diagonal important?

Answer 2. For two reasons:

1. Because the e4-square is on it. By maintaining his centre, Black provides an advanced central outpost on e4 for his knight. As we have seen, ...♘f6-e4 is often used as a freeing manoeuvre to exchange a couple of minor pieces. If White can prevent this option for his opponent with natural development, then he is inevitably reducing Black's options and thus the flexibility of Black's position.

2. Early activity. The b1-h7 diagonal is commonly an integral part of White's first incursions against Black's position. The following scenario is typical: White lines up his ♗d3 and ♕c2 against the h7-pawn, and then establishes his knight on the advanced central outpost e5. Black cannot play ...♘d7xe5 as d4xe5 forces the knight on f6 to move, when h7 hangs.

7 ♕c2 is also a very flexible move. Aggressive 0-0-0 options followed by a kingside hack are just as common as the quieter positional options.

Question 3. But I bet there are drawbacks!

Answer 3. Afraid so! Although the queen was not developed on d1, it was influential.

Question 4. What do you mean?

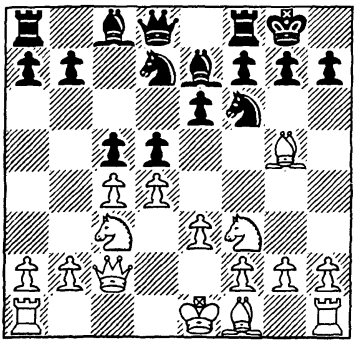
Answer 4. In the opening, the battleground revolves around the c- and d-files.

With 7 ♖c1, White brought major pieces to both of the important files. 7 ♕c2 by contrast just moves a major piece from one file to the other. Compared to 7 ♖c1, therefore, Black will inevitably have more central freedom.

Game 23
Salov-Piket
Madrid 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6

5 ♗g5 ♘bd7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♕c2 c5



Black chooses to free squares for his pieces with central liquidation, hoping that this will enable him to solve the problem of his light-squared bishop. The quieter 7...c6 and 7...h6 are seen in Games 26 and 27.

8 cxd5

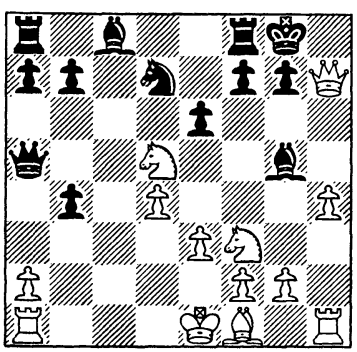
Although this is White's most natural move, he can also try 8 0-0-0 (Game 25) and 8 ♖d1 (Game 26).

8...♘xd5

8...cxd4 is featured in the next main game.

9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7

9...♘xe7 leads to positions similar to those after 8...cxd4 9 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 (see Game 24). If White wishes to avoid these lines, then 9 ♘xd5 exd5 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 forces the game continuation as 9...♗xg5 10 h4! ♗e7 (10...♕a5+?? 11 b4! cxb4 12 ♕xh7+!!



is a very famous trap: 12...♔xh7 13 hxg5+! ♔g6 14 ♘e7 is checkmate) 11 ♘xe7 ♕xe7 12 ♘g5 g6 13 0-0-0 offers White good attacking chances.

10 ♘xd5 exd5 11 ♗d3

White uses his presence on the b1-h7 diagonal to gain a tempo for development while forcing Black to weaken his kingside.

11...g6

Question 5. Why this rather than 11...h6?

Answer 5. With 11...g6, Black restricts his opponent's activity to the greatest degree. After 11...h7-h6, White maintains his breadth of access to the b1-h7 diagonal: for example, f5 is now a particularly pleasant square for a white knight (as it cannot be driven away by ...g7-g6) or even White's queen or bishop.

11...g6 takes control of the f5-square and destroys White's avenue of activity on the b1-h7 diagonal. It also provides an outpost for his own light-squared bishop on f5.

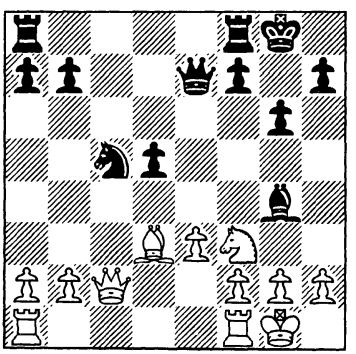
Question 6. Anything wrong with it?

Answer 6. The drawback is that it puts another square on the same colour as his bishop, which can cause problems later in the endgame.

12 dxc5

Black was threatening ...c5-c4, expanding on the queenside with gain of tempo.

12...♘xc5 13 0-0 ♗g4



Question 7. What is going on in this position?

Answer 7. Black has reaped several benefits

by accepting the isolated pawn on d5:

1. The recapture ...e6xd5 re-opened the c8-h3 diagonal, thus solving the problem of the light-squared bishop.

2. By allowing his knight to be exchanged on d5, Black has avoided the inactive knights that he gets after 9...♘xe7. 9...♕xe7 exchanged one of Black's potential problem pieces, leaving him with free development for the rest of his forces.

3. Black has transposed to a position where his own pieces are more actively and sensibly-placed than White's: thus, the white queen is very strange on c2 as it merely encourages Black to take the open c-file with tempo.

Question 8. So this is just fine for Black?

Answer 8. Not so fast! Black has had to accept the permanent structural weakness of an IQP on d5, having already exchanged the dark-squared bishops.

Question 9. Is this serious?

Answer 9. The dark-squared bishop performs both defensive and attacking roles: it covers the weak dark squares – c5, e5 and d6 – around the IQP, while catalysing black counterplay against White's kingside, particularly against h2. Without it, Black's position becomes rigid, preventing him from exploiting the attacking features of the IQP: the open lines and easy development it provides, and the advanced knight outpost on e4.

Question 10. So Black isn't fine then?

Answer 10. Not so fast again! Since Black cannot develop a kingside attack, he must channel his activity into another task: that of achieving ...d5-d4 and liquidating his weakness.

Question 11. I'm confused. What is your verdict on the position?

Answer 11. Objectively, Black can be confident about his position. The weakness of d5 is not so serious for two reasons:

1. Black's pieces are more active than his opponent's.

2. It is Black's only weakness, and thus easy to defend. Weaknesses usually only become a problem when they are in pairs.

Question 12. Why is that?

Answer 12. The greater the number of weaknesses, the more thinly you have to spread your forces in order to defend them, and thus the more vulnerable your position becomes.

Question 13. So why all the worrying about this position?

Answer 13. The essence of the position is that there is very little in it, but anything that does exist belongs to White. Only White can seriously entertain any hopes of winning. Consequently, Black must be prepared to settle for a draw here, as he has no real winning chances. The result of the game will be decided in the psychological approach of both sides.

Question 14. What should Black's approach be?

Answer 14. Black must adopt the 'I'm annoying you' approach: 'Hah! I've solved all my opening problems, and all you gave me in return was an IQP. I've emerged safe from the opening and you never even got the sniff of an attack!'

Question 15. Hmm, I see. And White's?

Answer 15. White needs the 'We'll see in the end, young man' approach. 'Well, even if you are more active than me, and you hold the balance at the start, activity always has a tendency to fade away, and then you'll just be left with one more weakness than me. Consequently, I will always have something to play for. We're in for a nice long game here.'

Black can often have problems with his position on aesthetic grounds: whatever he does, his position always looks a little worse than White's, and it can get a little depressing to look at if White hangs in and grinds. However, if you accept this, and a draw will really make you happy when you achieve it, then this is an excellent choice.

Question 16. I meant to ask. Couldn't Black try 13...♘xd3?

Answer 16. Yes, but this exchanges Black's best minor piece for White's least effective one. Black should aim to exchange the knights.

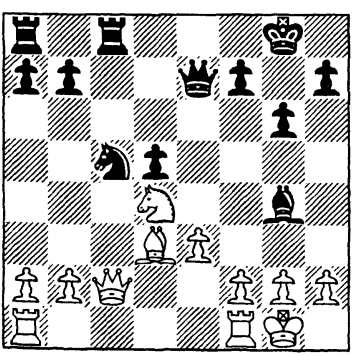
Question 17. Why is that?

Answer 17. With his knight, White can attack squares of both colours. This makes it the ideal piece to draw out weaknesses in Black's position, for example by attacking the queenside pawns and forcing them forward. The light-squared bishop is only good for the one-dimensional task of attacking the d5-pawn.

Question 18. Well, then why doesn't White play 13 ♖c1 to force 13...♘xd3+?

Answer 18. Because the presence of White's king in the centre gives Black good counterplay with 13...♘xd3+ 14 ♕xd3 ♗f5! (making use of 11...g6!) 15 ♕d4 (15 ♕xd5 ♖fd8 16 ♕e5 ♕xe5 17 ♘xe5 ♖ac8! gives Black the initiative according to Polugayevsky) 15...♗e4 16 0-0 ♗xf3 17 gxf3 ♕g5+ 18 ♔h1 ♕f6 19 ♔g2 ♕g5+ 20 ♕g4 ♕f6 and Black had equal chances in the game Cramling-Campora, Spanish Team Championship 1994.

14 ♘d4 ♖fc8



Black intends to challenge the knight on d4 with ...♘c5-e6.

15 ♕d2!?

A new idea at the time. 15 ♖fc1 or 15 ♖ac1 were normal.

Question 19. Doesn't Black just play 15...♘e6 here?

Answer 19. This allows 16 ♕xc8+ winning the two rooks for a queen.

Question 20. Is this good for White?

Answer 20. As White has no structural weaknesses, the queen has no clear targets. Without these, the queen's mobility and long-range power are of less use than the combined action of two rooks on the open c-file.

Question 21. So what can Black do?

Answer 21. In Piket-Morovic, Wijk aan Zee 1994, after 15 ♖fc1, Black played 15...♗d7! preparing 16...♘e6. After 16 ♕d2 ♘e6 17 ♗e2 ♕f6 18 ♘f3 ♗c6 19 ♖c3 d4! 20 exd4 ♖d8 Black soon recaptured the d4-pawn with equality. A little later at Dos Hermanas 1995, Piket tried the black side against Shirov and after 15 ♖ac1 ♗d7 16 ♕d2 ♕f6 17 ♖fd1 ♕b6! 18 ♖c3 a6! 19 ♖dc1 ♘e6 20 ♖b3 ♕a7 21 ♘xe6 ♖xc1+ 22 ♕xc1 ♗xe6, his disadvantage was negligible.

Question 22. What is Salov's idea?

Answer 22. I'm not 100% certain. Probably, it is to meet 15...♗d7 with 16 ♕b4!? preventing ...♘c5-e6 due to the loose queen on e7.

Question 23. It doesn't seem that much.

Answer 23. No, but that's not the point. Salov keeps the game going, and whilst the game is still going, there is always the chance of a win, especially for Salov! There is no-one better at the 'we'll see in the end' kind of position than him!

15...♘e4

Perhaps 15...♘e6!?, although the retreat of the bishop on g4 is then blocked.

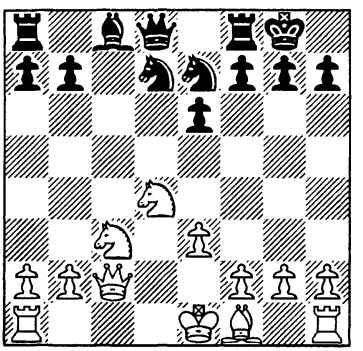
16 ♕e1 ♗d7 17 ♕e2 ♖c5 18 ♖fc1 ♖ac8 19 ♕e1 ♕f6 20 ♖xc5 ♘xc5 21 ♕d2 ♕b6 22 b3 a5 23 ♖c1 ♖c7 24 h3 h5 25 ♗e2 ♘e4 26 ♕b2 ♖xc1+ 27 ♕xc1 ♕b4 28 a3 ♕d6 29 ♕b2 b6 30 ♗f3 h4 31 b4 axb4 32 axb4 f5 33 ♕a2 ♔g7 34 ♕a7 ♘f6 35 b5 ♔h6 36 ♕a8 g5?

Too risky. 36...♗e8 was still okay for Black according to Tsesarsky.

37 ♕d8 ♔g6 38 ♘c6 g4 39 hxg4 fxg4 40 ♗e2 ♔g5 41 ♕xb6 ♗xc6 42 ♕xc6 ♕b4 43 ♕c7 g3 44 ♕e5+ ♔g6 45 ♗d3+ ♔f7 46 ♕f5 ♔e7 47 ♕e5+ ♔f7 48 ♕f5 ♔e7 49 ♗f1 ♕b2 50 ♕f4 ♘e4 51 ♕xh4+ ♔e6 52 ♕g4+ ♔e7 53 ♕h4+ ♔e6 54 ♕g4+ ♔e7 ½-½

Game 24
P.Cramling-Campora
Spanish Team Ch. 1993

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♕c2 c5 8 cxd5 cxd4 9 ♘xd4 ♘xd5 10 ♗xe7 ♘xe7



Question 24. Black has got everything he wants here, hasn't he?

Answer 24. Black has achieved the first of his aims. Through exchanges and the central break ...c7-c5, he has managed to free his position slightly. Now he must attend to his attention to his development problems.

Question 25. Development problems? He's ahead in development, isn't he?

Answer 25. Although Black has castled and White hasn't, this is very easily remedied for White. His bishop will come to e2 or d3 and then his king will castle to safety. However, Black's logjam of queenside pieces will take longer to resolve.

Question 26. You seem to think that White is better here.

Answer 26. He is slightly better for two reasons:

1. More active minor pieces. The contrast is seen clearly with the knights: White's knights from their outposts on c3 and d4 prevent Black's from reaching their own outposts on c6 and d5.

2. Black's weak dark squares. The exchange of dark-squared bishops has left Black with the vulnerable central squares d6 and c5. These are ideal squares for the white knights to probe and loosen Black's queenside structure. Since Black has dark-square weaknesses, White will often aim to exchange queens to remove his opponent's best remaining defender of the dark squares.

Question 27. But White isn't going to get a kingside attack, is he?

Answer 27. No, but you can't get a kingside attack every game! White's target is the black queenside. Consequently, his light-squared bishop is more likely to come to f3 (via e2) than to d3!

Question 28. How can Black develop?

Answer 28. Black has three methods:

1. ...♘d7-f6 and ...♗c8-d7.
2. ...b7-b6 and ...♗c8-b7.
3. ...♘d7-f6 and ...e6-e5.

Clearly, the last two are the most risky since they both loosen Black's structure. The move ...b7-b6 in particular greatly weakens the queenside light squares. It also takes away the b6-square from the black queen, which is its most comfortable post.

Question 29. Hey, ...e6-e5 looks like a good idea!

Answer 29. It is a key resource for Black. The ...e6-e5 advance reopens the c8-h3 diagonal, providing the light-squared bishop on c8 with a choice of squares, and drives White's knight from its outpost on d4.

Question 30. Problems?

Answer 30. First of all, it loosens Black's structure: the pawn on e5 will have to be defended by a piece since it is no longer part

of the pawn chain. Moreover, while it drives the white knight from d4, it does not create any new outposts for Black's own knights. This is Black's main problem: when White's knight is driven from d4, it can advance to b5 to come to d6, or if it drops back to b3, it will jump to a5 or c5 to attack the b7-pawn. Black's knights have no prospects: they can occupy safe squares, but they are not actively placed.

Question 31. How serious is this?

Answer 31. These are not life-threatening factors, but once you are aware of them, you can understand why Black often has to suffer a bit at the beginning of the middlegame.

11 ♗e2

11 0-0-0!? was the enterprising choice in Ruzele-Khurtsidze, Groningen 1996, when 11...♕a5?! 12 g4! ♘f6 13 ♘b3 ♕c7?! 14 g5 ♘fd5 15 ♘xd5 ♕xc2+ 16 ♔xc2 ♘xd5 17 ♗g2 was very pleasant for White. Black should have played her queen to b6 when 12 ♗d3 ♘f6 13 g4 transposes to Khenkin-Arbakov, USSR 1987, after which 13...e5! 14 g5 exd4 15 gxf6 ♕xf6 16 exd4 ♗g4 was good for Black.

Question 32. Doesn't 11 ♗d3 gain a tempo against h7?

Answer 32. Black's favoured development scheme is ...♘d7-f6 followed by either ...e6-e5 or ...♗c8-d7. Consequently, after 11 ♗d3 ♘f6 (protecting h7) is Black's intention anyway. White's bishop is better on e2, from where it can move to f3, eyeing the vulnerable b7-pawn.

Novikov-Gorelov, Pavlodar 1987, continued 12 0-0 ♗d7 13 ♖fd1 (13 ♕b3 ♕a5!) 13...♕b6 14 ♖ac1 ♖ac8 15 ♕b3 ♕xb3 16 ♘xb3 b6 (16...♖fd8 and 16...♘ed5!? are suggested by Gorelov) 17 ♘d4 ♘fd5 18 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 19 ♗e4 ♘f6 20 ♗b7 ♖xc1 21 ♖xc1 ♖d8! with equality.

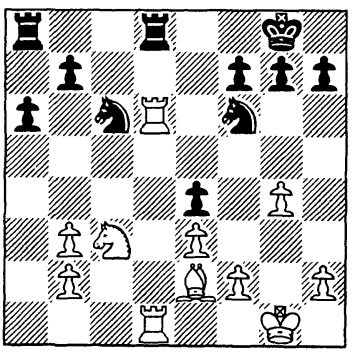
11...♘f6 12 ♗f3!?

Two other moves have been tried here:

a) 12 ♕b3!? a6!? 13 0-0 ♕a5 14 ♗f3 e5! 15 ♘c2 ♖b8 followed by ...♗c8-e6 was fine for Black in Kiselev-Arbakov, USSR 1987.

b) 12 0-0 ♗d7 13 ♖fd1 (13 ♕b3 ♕a5 14 ♖fd1 ♖ac8 15 ♖ac1 [15 ♘db5 ♗c6 16 ♕a3 ♕xa3 17 ♘xa3 ♘ed5 was nice for Black in Peev-Ziatdinov, Belgrade 1990] is the *ECO* recommendation and seems very reasonable, although 15...b6 16 ♘db5 ♘ed5 17 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 18 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 19 e4 ♘f4 20 ♗f1 is not as large an advantage as claimed) 13...♕b6 14 ♕b3 ♕xb3 15 ♘xb3 ♖fd8 16 ♘d4 ♘c6 17 ♘xc6 (17 ♗f3 ♘e5) was agreed drawn in Kharitonov-Komarov, Leeuwarden 1995.

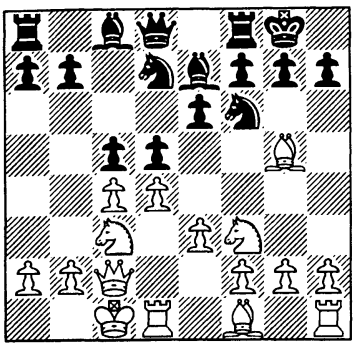
12...e5 13 ♘db5 ♗f5 14 ♕b3 ♕b6 15 0-0 a6 16 ♘d4 ♕xb3 17 ♘xb3 ♗d3 18 ♖fd1 e4 19 ♗e2 ♗c2 20 ♖d6 ♗xb3 21 axb3 ♖fd8 22 ♖ad1 ♘c6 23 g4



White is pressing, but Black defends well.

23...h6 24 h4 ♖xd6 25 ♖xd6 ♖e8 26 g5 hxg5 27 hxg5 ♘h7 28 g6 ♘g5 29 ♗c4 ♔f8 30 gxf7 ♖e7 31 ♔g2 ♘xf7 32 ♗xf7 ♔xf7 33 ♔g3 ♘a5 34 b4 ♘c4 35 ♖d4 ♘xb2 36 ♘xe4 b6 37 ♔f4 a5 38 bxa5 bxa5 39 ♖d2 ♘c4 40 ♖d4 ♘b2 41 ♖d2 ♘c4 42 ♖d4 ♖c7 43 ♖d8 ♖a7 44 ♖d4 ♘b6 45 ♖d6 ♘d7 46 ♘c3 ♔e7 47 ♖g6 ♔f7 48 ♖d6 a4 49 ♘b5 ♖b7 50 ♘d4 ♘b6 51 ♘c2 ♔e7 52 ♖g6 ♔f7 53 ♖c6 ♘d7 54 ♖a6 ♖b2 55 ♖a7 ♔e8 56 ♘a3 ♘c5 57 ♖a5 ♖xf2+ 58 ♔e5 ♘d7+ 59 ♔d4 ♖d2+ 60 ♔c3 ♖e2 61 ♘c4 ♖a2 62 ♘d6+ ♔e7 63 ♘f5+ ♔f6 64 ♘xg7 ♔xg7 65 ♖a7 ½-½

The 8 cxd5 variation is the main line in the 7 ♕c2 systems. White does have an aggressive alternative, however: 8 0-0-0.



Question 33. Wow! Can White do this?

Answer 33. While the intention of 8 0-0-0 is clearly attacking, it also contains certain positional features. Most importantly, 8 0-0-0 brings a rook to the d-file. This

1. Ensures that White has a major piece on each of the 'battleground' files.

2. Puts pressure on the black centre.

3. Places the rook opposite the queen on d8, which may cause problems once the centre is cleared of pawns.

Moreover, White possesses several 'pressure points' on the black position:

1. The unresolved central tension.

2. The h4-d8 diagonal, due to the bishop on g5.

3. The b1-h7 diagonal in the form of a future ♕c2 and ♗d3 battery.

Consequently, as well as being an aggressive continuation, 8 0-0-0 is also well-founded positionally, which makes it a dangerous continuation for Black.

Question 34. Isn't it a bit risky?

Answer 34. That is true. The drawback to castling queenside is that it places both the queen and the king on a-file that will soon be opened. This inevitably gives Black some attacking and tactical ideas of his own.

Question 35. In that case, why doesn't White just play 8 ♖d1?

Answer 35. This is a good solid move, though it lacks the punch of 8 0-0-0, as White still has to castle his king to safety. Play might continue 8...cxd4 9 ♘xd4 (9 exd4 b6 10 ♗d3 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♗b7 is fine for Black) 9...♘b6!? (9...dxc4 10 ♗xc4 ♕a5! [hitting the bishop on g5 and thus freeing the knight on d7 with tempo] 11 ♗h4 ♘e5 12 ♗e2 ♘g6 13 ♗g3 e5 [13...♗d7 14 0-0 was agreed drawn in Dreev-Balashov, St. Petersburg Zonal 1993, but Korchnoi's 14 ♘b3 ♕b6 15 h4! ♖fc8 16 h5 ♘f8 17 h6 g6 18 0-0 looked very strong against Osnos, USSR Championship 1963] 14 ♘b3 ♕b6 when 15 0-0 [15 h4 h5! 16 ♗d3 ♗g4 17 ♖c1 e4! 18 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 19 ♕xe4 ♖fe8 gave Black good compensation in Gorelov-Arbakov, USSR 1987] 15...♗e6 16 ♗d3 [stressing the vulnerability of the e5-pawn] 16...♗d6 17 ♗f5 c4 18 ♖fe1 gave White an annoying initiative in C.Hansen-Kveinys, Groningen 1990) 10 ♗e2 ♗d7! 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 cxd5 ♘xd5 13 ♘xd5 exd5 14 0-0 ♕b6 15 ♖d2 ♖ac8 16 ♕b1 g6, which was approximately equal in Timoshchenko-Kharitonov, Frunze 1988.

8 dxc5 is the other sensible move, but 8...♘xc5 9 ♖d1 ♕a5 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♘d4 ♗d7 (11...♘ce4 12 ♘b3!) 12 ♗d3 ♗a4 13 ♘b3 ♗xb3 14 axb3 ♘ce4 15 ♗xe4 dxe4 16 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 17 0-0 ♗xc3 gave White nothing in Tisdall-Ostenstad, Norwegian Championship 1996.

Game 25
Orsag-Bellini
Montecatini 1997

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♕c2 c5 8 0-0-0 b6!?

Question 36. Is this good?

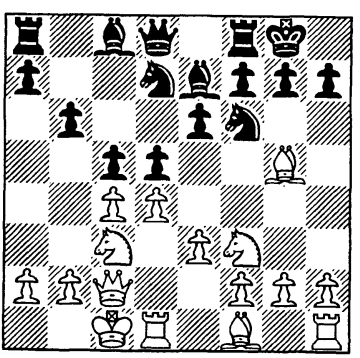
Answer 36. I really like this move. Black prepares to develop the light-squared bishop on b7 and then to bring his queen's rook to the important c-file.

Alternatively:

a) 8...dxc4 (8...h6 9 h4!) 9 ♗xc4 ♕a5 10 d5! ♘b6 11 d6! ♗d8 12 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 13 ♘e4 ♗d7 14 ♘xf6+ gxf6 15 h4! ♘xc4 16 ♕xc4 e5 17 h5 was very good for White in Browne-I.Ivanov, USA 1995

b) 8...♕a5 9 h4 ♘b6?! 10 ♗d3! h6 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 g4 cxd4 13 exd4 dxc4 14 ♗h7+ ♔h8 15 g5 ♗e7 16 gxh6 gxh6 17 ♖dg1 gave White fantastic attacking chances in Vyzmanavin-Ruban, Sochi 1989. Mikhail Gurevich considers that 9...cxd4 10 ♘xd4 (10 exd4 ♗b4!? offers Black counterplay) 10...♗b4 11 ♘b3 ♕b6 12 cxd5 ♗xc3 13 ♕xc3 ♘xd5 14 ♕d4 f6 15 ♗f4 ♕xd4 16 ♘xd4 ♘7b6 followed by ...e6-e5 equalises for Black.

c) 8...cxd4 9 ♘xd4 (9 exd4!? h6 [9...b6!?] 10 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 11 ♔b1 ♗b4 12 c5 ♗d7 13 ♘e5 ♗xc3 14 ♕xc3 a5 15 ♗d3 was a little better for White in Moskalenko-Hoffman, Benasque 1993) 9...♘b6!? (9...a6 10 h4 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♕c7 12 ♗e2 ♖e8 13 ♗f4 e5 14 ♗g3 ♘b6 was fine for Black in Cvitan-Hoffman, Bern 1992) 10 ♔b1 ♗d7 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 c5 ♘c8 13 ♗d3 h6 14 g4 ♗xd4 15 exd4 b6 16 ♖hg1 ♘e7 17 g5 h5 18 g6! looked very dangerous for Black in Browne-I.Ivanov, USA Championship 1992.

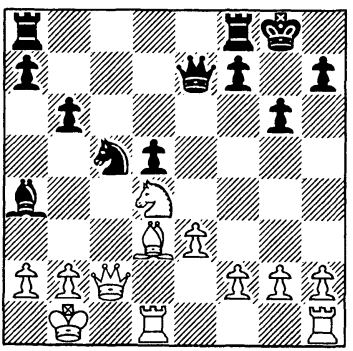


9 cxd5

9 e4 dxe4 10 ♘xe4 ♗b7 11 ♗d3 ♘xe4 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 14 ♕xe4 ♘f6 was fine for Black in Ftacnik-Balashov, Trnava 1988, while 9 dxc5 ♘xc5 10 cxd5 ♘xd5 11 h4 ♗d7!? 12 ♘xd5 exd5 13 ♖xd5 ♖c8 14 ♔b1 ♗a4 15 ♕c4 ♕e8 16 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 17 ♗e2 ♗c6 18 ♖d4 ♘e4 gave Black good play in Kiselev-Kveinys, Warsaw 1991.

9...♘xd5 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 ♘xd5 exd5 12 dxc5 ♘xc5 13 ♔b1 ♗d7 14 ♗d3 g6 15 ♘d4 ♗a4!

Weakening the white queenside.



16 b3 ♗d7 17 h4 ♖fc8 18 ♕e2 a5 19 h5 a4 20 hxg6 hxg6 21 ♖h2 axb3 22 axb3 ♘xd3 23 ♖xd3 ♗b5 24 ♘xb5 ♕e5 25 ♘d4 ♕xh2 26 g3 ♕h1+ 27 ♖d1 ♕e4+ 28 ♔b2 ♕e7 29 ♔b1 ♖a3 30 ♕b2 ♕e4+ 31 ♘c2 ♖xc2 0-1

Question 37. Can Black use the queenside plans like ...a7-a6 against 7 ♕c2?

Answer 37. White's simplest response is 8 cxd5, when 8...exd5 9 ♗d3 c6, transposes into an Exchange QGD where Black has made an unprovoked queenside weakness with ...a7-a6. Also 8 c5!? c6 9 ♗d3, preventing ...e6-e5, is tempting.

Question 38. Okay, well how about 7...c6?

Answer 38. This slower plan of development has recently become fashionable.

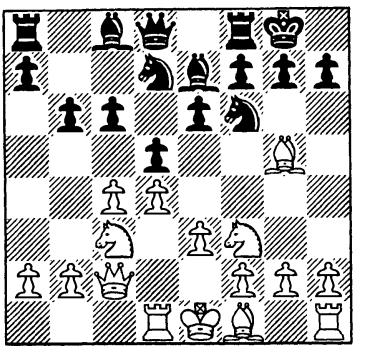
Game 26
Garcia Ilundain-Ubilava
Ampuriabrava 1997

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 d4 d5 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7

5 ♗g5 ♘bd7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♕c2 c6 8 ♖d1

White places his rook on a more natural square than in the 7 ♖c1 and 8 ♕c2 lines, opposite the black queen on d8. However, the simple 8 ♗d3 worked out well in Korchnoi-Hoffman, Salamanca 1991, after 8...dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♘d5 10 h4!? ♖e8 11 e4 ♘b4 12 ♕e2 c5 13 0-0-0! cxd4 14 ♖xd4 ♘c6 15 ♖d6!! f6 16 ♗xe6+ ♔h8 17 ♖d2 fxg5 18 ♖hd1.

8...b6!?



Black aims to develop his bishop to b7 and then later to free himself with ...c6-c5.

9 ♗d3

This loses the fight for the tempo, but White needs to develop in response to...b7-b6. Moreover, any subsequent gain of queenside space with ...b6-b5 will give the tempo back to White.

9...dxc4!

9...h6 10 ♗h4 ♗b7 11 0-0 c5 12 ♗g3 cxd4 13 exd4 dxc4 14 ♗xc4 ♗xf3 15 gxf3 ♘h5 15 d5! gave White the initiative in Kasparov-Amura, Buenos Aires simultaneous 1992. The ...♗b7xf3 exchange ruins White's kingside pawns, but loses control over all Black's central light squares.

10 ♗xc4 ♘d5 11 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 12 ♘xd5

12 0-0 ♗b7 13 ♘xd5 led to a draw in A.Sokolov-Landa, Novgorod 1997.

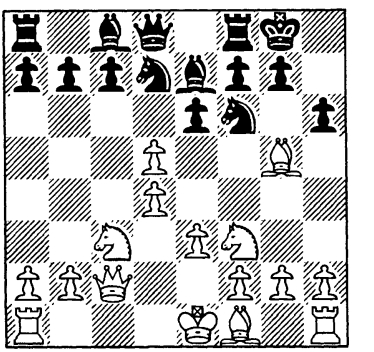
12...cxd5 13 ♗d3 ♘f6 14 0-0 ♗d7 15 ♘e5 ♖ac8 16 ♕e2 ♖c7 17 ♗a6 ♗c8 18 ♖c1 ♘e4 19 ♗d3 ♗b7 20 ♖xc7 ½-½

This line is worth more tests.

The final idea is 7...h6. As we have seen, this move would be useful in many lines, but the following game has always been considered the big problem!

Game 27
Kasparov-Portisch
Brussels 1986

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♕c2 h6 8 cxd5!



8 ♗f4 is the other typical idea, e.g. 8...c5 9 dxc5 (9 cxd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xd5 exd5 11 ♗e2 cxd4 12 exd4 ♗b4+ 13 ♗d2 ♗d6 14 0-0 ♖e8 was level in Bezold-Lengyel, Budapest 1993) 9...♘xc5 10 ♗e2 dxc4 (10...b6 11 ♖d1 ♗b7 is equal according to Ftacnik) 11 ♗xc4 a6 12 a4 b6 13 0-0 ♗b7 14 ♖fd1, as in Tisdall-Ostenstad, Gausdal 1993, and now 14...♕c8 15 ♘e5 ♖d8 was best according to Ftacnik with a tiny edge for White.

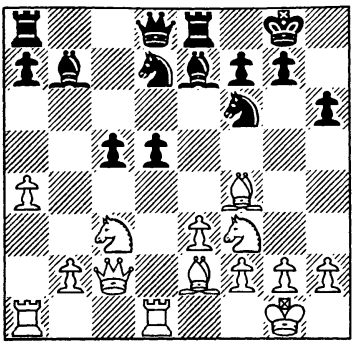
8...exd5

Portisch gives the stunning line 8...hxg5 9 dxe6 fxe6 10 ♘xg5 ♘b6 11 h4! c5 12 h5 cxd4 13 h6! dxc3 14 ♖d1 ♕e8 15 hxg7 ♔xg7 16 ♖h7+ ♔g8 17 ♖d4!, intending ♖d4-h4 with a big attack.

9 ♗f4! c5

9...c6 10 0-0-0 with h2-h3 and g2-g4 to follow is clearly better for White according to Portisch. That ...h7-h6 move is a real weakness for Black.

10 ♗e2 b6 11 0-0 ♗b7 12 ♖fd1 ♖c8 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 a4!



14...♕a5?

14...a5 was absolutely necessary according to Portisch.

15 ♘h4! ♖fd8 16 ♘f5 ♗f8 17 ♘b5 ♘e8 18 ♗d6! ♘xd6 19 ♘fxd6 ♖b8 20 ♘xb7 ♖xb7 21 ♖xd5

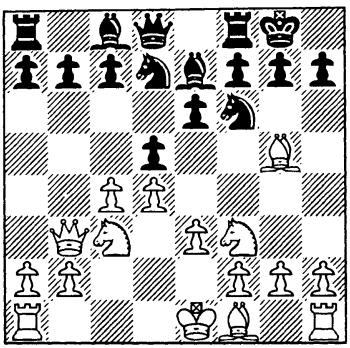
Now all Black can do is suffer.

21...♖db8 22 ♕d2! ♕xd2 23 ♖xd2 ♘f6 24 ♖a2 ♘e4 25 ♖c2 ♖d7 26 g3 a5 27 ♔g2 g6 28 ♗f3 ♘f6 29 ♘a3 ♗d6 30 ♗c6 ♖dd8 31 ♖a1 ♗e5 32 ♗b5 ♘d5 33 ♖b1 ♗d6 34 ♖d2 ♘b6 35 ♖c1 ♗e7 36 ♖e2 ♖bc8 37 ♘b1 ♔g7 38 ♘d2 ♖a8 39 ♘b3 ♖dc8 40 ♖ec2 c4 41 ♘d2 ♖a7 42 ♘xc4 ♘xc4 43 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 44 ♖xc4 f5 45 h3 h5 46 g4 hxg4 47 hxg4 fxg4 48 ♔g3 ♗d6+ 49 ♔xg4 ♖c7 50 ♗c6 ♖f7 51 f4 ♔h6 52 ♗d5 ♖f6 53 ♖c1 ♔g7 54 b3 ♖f8 55 ♖d1 ♗c5 56 ♖d3 ♗a3 57 ♗c4 ♗c1 58 ♖d7+ ♔h6 59 ♖e7 ♗d2 60 ♔f3 ♗b4 61 ♖b7 ♗c3 62 ♗d3 ♖f6 63 ♔g4 ♗d2 64 f5! 1-0

Finally, we take a brief look at the remaining alternatives.

Game 28
Akopian-Short
European Team Ch, Pula 1997

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♘bd7 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♕b3



7...a6!?

7...c5 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 10 dxc5 ♘xc5 11 ♕a3 is a slight advantage to White according to Akopian. 7...c6 is the main move, e.g. 8 ♗d3 dxc4 (8...a6 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 0-0 b5 11 a4 was good for White in Akopian-Ubilava, Manila Olympiad 1992) 9 ♕xc4 ♘d5 (9...c5 10 dxc5 ♘xc5 11 ♗c2 ♕a5 [11...♕b6 looks more normal] 12 0-0 ♘cd7 13 ♖fd1 ♘e5 14 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 15 ♘e4! gave White a clear advantage in Akopian-San Segundo, Madrid 1997] 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 0-0 ♘xc3! 12 ♕xc3 (12 bxc3!?) 12...c5 13 ♖ac1 b6 and now 14 ♕c2!? h6 15 ♗e4 ♖b8 16 ♕a4 transposes to the Lasker lines covered in Chapter 1.

8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗xe7

Short's intention was 9 ♘xd5 ♗xg5 10 ♘xg5 exd5 11 ♕xd5 c6! 12 ♕f5 ♘f6 13 ♕c5 ♘d7 14 ♕f5 ♘f6 with a draw by repetition.

9...♘xe7 10 ♗e2 b6!?

10...c5 leads to a version of the 7 ♕c2 c5 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 line where White has his queen on b3 and Black has played the unusual ...a7-a6. These changes should normally favour White rather than his opponent.

11 0-0 ♗b7 12 ♖fd1 ♘f6 13 ♖ac1 ♘g6 14 ♘e5 ♕e7 15 ♗f3 ♗xf3 16 ♘xf3 ♖fc8 17 g3?!

17 e4! b5 18 e5 ♘d7 19 ♘e4 is recommended by Tsesarsky as a slight edge

for White, which seems correct.

17...b5 18 a4 ♖ab8 19 axb5 axb5 20 ♘e2 c6 21 ♖c2 e5 22 dxe5 ♘xe5 23 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 ½-½

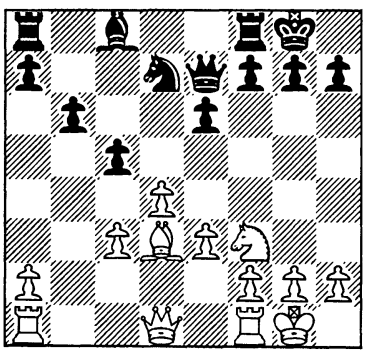
This interesting line needs more tests.

Game 29
Lputian-Cifuentes Parada
Ubeda 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♗g5 ♗e7 5 ♘c3 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 cxd5

The idea of this line is just to transpose into a normal Exchange QGD after 7...exd5, but Black has a different possibility.

7...♘xd5!? 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 ♗d3 ♘xc3 10 bxc3 c5 11 0-0 b6



12 a4

12 ♕c2 h6 13 a4 ♗b7 14 e4 ♖fc8 15 ♕e2 ♘f6 16 a5 ♕d8 was a little better for White in Notkin-Kharitonov, Russian Championship, Elista 1994

12...♗b7 13 a5 e5 14 ♗b5 exd4 15 cxd4 cxd4

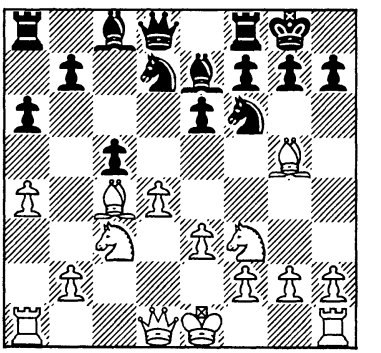
15...♘f6 16 axb6 axb6 17 ♗e2 ♖fd8 was agreed drawn in Itkis-Kharitonov, Moscow 1995.

16 ♘xd4 bxa5 17 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 18 ♖xa5 ♖fd8 19 h3 g6 20 ♕a1 a6 21 ♖b1 ♖ac8 22 ♖c1 ♖xc1+ 23 ♕xc1 ♖c8 24 ♕b2 ♕c7 25 ♕b4 ♕c1+ 26 ♔h2 ♕c7+ 27 ♔g1 ♕c1+ 28 ♔h2 ♕c7+ ½-½

Game 30
Ilinsky-Nenashev
Bishkek Zonal 1993

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♗d3 dxc4 8 ♗xc4 a6 9 a4 c5!

The simplest, transposing into the IQP position we saw in the previous chapter, but without the useful tempo move ♖a1-c1 for White!

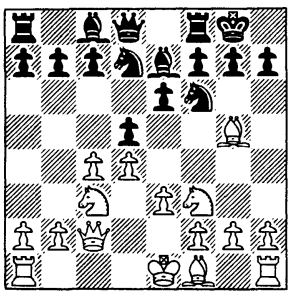


10 0-0 cxd4 11 exd4 ♘b6 12 ♗b3 ♗d7 13 a5 ♘c8!? 14 ♘e5 ♗c6 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♖e1 ♘e7 17 ♘xc6 bxc6 18 ♖a4 ♘f5 19 ♘e2 ♕d7 20 ♗c2 ♖ab8 21 ♕d3 ♖xb2 22 g4 ♖xc2 23 ♕xc2 ♘xd4 24 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 25 ♖a3 c5 26 ♕e4 c4 27 ♔g2 e5 28 ♖b1 c3 29 ♖a2 ♕e6 30 ♖c2 h5 31 h3 hxg4 32 hxg4 g6 33 ♖b7 ♔g7 34 ♔g3 ♖h8 35 ♔g2 ♖h4 36 f3 ♖h8 37 ♖c7 ♕f6 38 ♔f1 ♖h1+ 39 ♔e2 ♕d6 40 ♕c6 ♕d8 41 ♖d7 ♕g5 42 ♔d3 ♖d1+ 43 ♔c4 ♖d2 44 ♖c1 ♖h2 45 ♖e1 ♕f4 46 ♕e4 ♕g5 47 ♖xd4 exd4 48 ♕xd4+ ♔h7 49 ♕xc3 ♕f4+ 50 ♖e4 ♕c7+ 51 ♔d4 ♕d6+ 52 ♔e3 f5 53 gxf5 gxf5 54 ♖d4 ♕e5+ 0-1

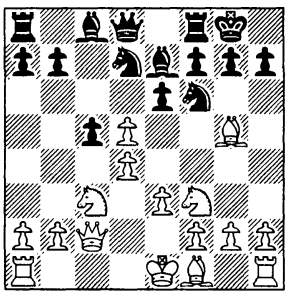
Summary
To my mind, 7 ♕c2 is a less promising option against the Orthodox than 7 ♖c1 (Chapters 2 and 3). In particular the middlegame after 7...c5 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 10 ♘xd5 exd5 seems a simple way for Black to play for a draw, whilst Ubilava's 7...c6 followed by 8...b6 has defeated all White's attempts so far.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 ♘bd7

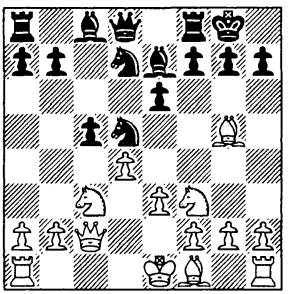
7 ♕c2 *(D)*
7 ♕b3 – Game 28
7 cxd5 – Game 29
7 ♗d3 – Game 30
7...c5
7...c6 – Game 26
7...h6 – Game 27
8 cxd5 *(D)*
8 0-0-0 – Game 25
8...♘xd5 *(D)*
8...cxd4 – Game 24
9 ♗xe7 *– Game 23*



7 ♕c2

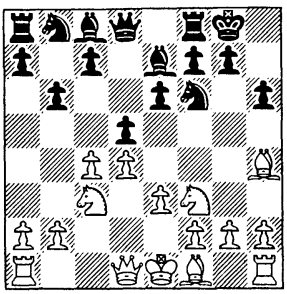


8 cxd5



8...♘xd5

CHAPTER FIVE



Tartakower Variation: Fixed Centre Plans

The Tartakower variation arises after the sequence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6

Question 1. What is happening here?

Answer 1. The most far-reaching development decision in any opening is the placement of the bishops. Since their development requires a preceding pawn move, the mobilisation of the bishops alters the pawn structure and inevitably creates some weakness in the position. Ironically, the fates of the bishops are invariably entwined, with success for one leading to penury for the other! Thus in queen's pawn openings, the dark-squared bishop is naturally activated on the f8-a3 diagonal as ...e7-e6 is necessary to Black's central control, but of course this blocks the access of the light-squared bishop to the c8-h3 diagonal. With 7...b6, Black prepares the most harmonious form of development in Queen's Gambit openings, opening the long a8-h1 diagonal to the light-squared bishop by freeing the b7-square. We can also see this scheme of development in the QGA (1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♕e2 b5 8 ♗b3 ♗b7) and the Semi-Slav (1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 e3 ♘bd7 6 ♗d3 dxc4 7 ♗xc4 b5 8 ♗d3 ♗b7).

Question 2. What do you mean by 'harmonious'?

Answer 2. Successful development depends on two general factors: your pieces should have their own space – they shouldn't get in each other's way; and they should contribute to a common purpose.

Question 3. So what are Black's pieces doing here?

Answer 3. Once Black has completed his minor piece development with ...♗c8-b7 and ...♘b8-d7, his next opening goal is to break in the centre with ...c7-c5. Logically his development should support both this break and his centre which will come under greater strain once the central tension increases.

Question 4. Right! How is the d5-pawn protected?

Answer 4. The bishop on b7 and the knight on f6 support the d5-pawn directly. The bishop on e7 and the knight on d7 support d5 indirectly by countering the pressure exerted by White's dark-squared bishop on h4: the bishop on e7 breaks the pin on the knight on f6, while ♗h4xf6 can be met by ...♘d7xf6 maintaining a knight's protection of d5.

Question 5. Okay! And how is ...c7-c5 supported?

Answer 5. Black's central break is

supported by the bishop on e7 and the knight on d7. Most importantly, 7...b6, which solved the problem of Black's light-squared bishop, provides pawn support so that after c4xd5 ...e6xd5, d4xc5, Black can recapture with ...b6xc5 and avoid the IQP!

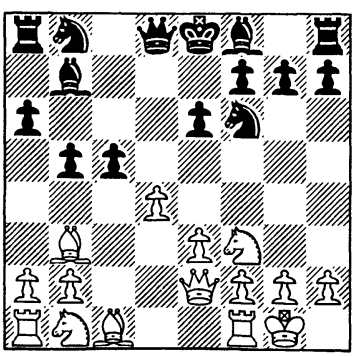
Somehow, all Black's development unites around Black's central goals which makes his position very solid and harmonious.

Question 6. So is this a miracle cure or are there some drawbacks to 7...b6?

Answer 6. The most visible drawback is that Black weakens his queenside light squares by abandoning his pawn protection of c6 and a6. The weakness of the c6-square is particularly important as White has varied means of targeting this square, for example by opening the c-file with c4xd5 and then playing ♖a1-c1, or by occupying his central outpost with ♘f3-e5. The second drawback is less obvious and concerns Black's major pieces and his queen in particular.

Question 7. What do you mean?

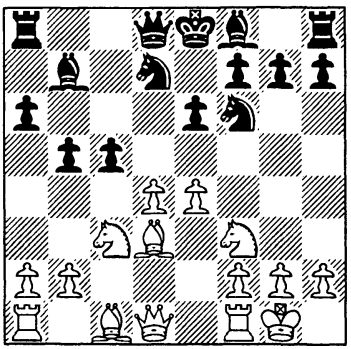
Answer 7. It's easiest to demonstrate this by comparing it to other Queen's Gambit openings: the QGA – 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 a6 4 e3 ♘f6 5 ♗xc4 e6 6 0-0 c5 7 ♕e2 b5 8 ♗b3 ♗b7



and the Semi-Slav – 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 e3 ♘bd7 6 ♗d3 dxc4 7 ♗xc4 b5 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 a6 10 e4 c5

see following diagram

In both these cases, at the expense of his uncastled king, Black has gained territory on the queenside. By playing ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5, Black has created space behind his queenside pawns into which he can safely move his queen; thus Black will connect his rooks and link up his position.



In the Tartakower, with the pawns on a7 and b6, Black's queen enjoys no such resting place, and it thus becomes harder to complete Black's development by connecting the rooks. Once his central break ...c7-c5 is in sight, Black will have to solve this last development problem, for example with the Lasker manoeuvre ...♘f6-e4 to exchange the dark-squared bishops and free a post on e7 for the black queen.

Question 8. Oh dear! This sounds serious. Doesn't it?

Answer 8. No! These are subtle points – none of them are remotely fatal! However, by appreciating them, we can better understand the thrust of White's efforts to gain an advantage.

In this chapter we shall deal with schemes for White that involve fixing the centre pawns. The next chapter will then deal with routine development plans. If White wants to fix the centre, he can either exchange on d5 immediately (as in Games 31-33) or first capture on f6 to prevent Black from recapturing on d5 with the knight (Games 34-47).

White's first attempt is **8 cxd5.**

Question 9. What is White aiming for with this exchange?

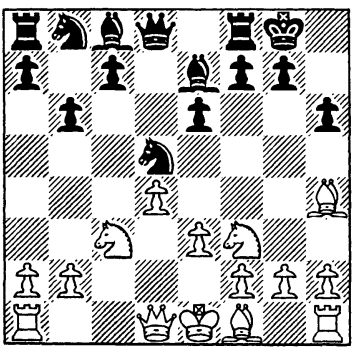
Answer 9. This straightforward move has several ideas:

1. White crosses his opponent's desire to activate his light-squared bishop on b7 by forcing a black pawn to occupy d5 and block the a8-h1 diagonal.

2. White opens up the c-file and stabilises the centre, enabling him to target Black's c-pawn and the c6-square with ♖a1-c1 in combination with ♘f3-e5.

3. By settling the central structure at this early stage, White reduces the number of possible pawn structures to a minimum which makes his choice of development scheme a great deal easier (though of course Black can also benefit from this).

8...♘xd5!



Question 10. Why? What's wrong with 8...exd5?

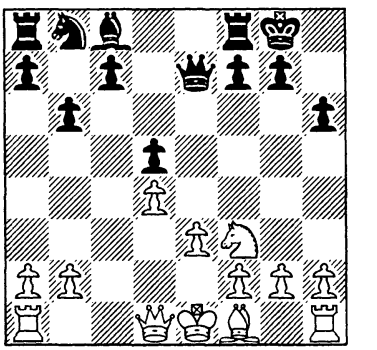
Answer 10. Let us first consider the point of 8...♘xd5. By committing himself to the early exchange on d5, White seeks to deny his opponent the active benefits of 7...b6. Black's immediate opening task is to redress the balance by improving his position in another way.

Question 11. Aha, so he's losing a bit on the activity front so he should try and gain...?

Answer 11. On the 'comfort' front! With 8...♘xd5! Black borrows a manoeuvre from the Orthodox systems in order to free his position.

Question 12. How is that?

Answer 12. After **9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7,** Black has already solved one development problem: by securing the e7 post for his queen, Black ensures that he will be able to connect his rooks and complete his development. Moreover, after **10 ♘xd5 exd5**



the exchange of two sets of minor pieces removes any spatial worries that Black might have had.

Question 13. Why does White play 10 ♘xd5?

Answer 13. It is the consistent follow-up to 8 cxd5 - White must play 10 ♘xd5 to force a black pawn to the d5-square.

Question 14. All the same, White has achieved what he wanted, despite 8...♘xd5.

Answer 14. Yes, but with the exchanges secured by 8...♘xd5 Black has also achieved several things that White did not want! Thus the character of the position has changed, but not the balance between the two sides.

Question 15. Whereas 8...exd5...?

Answer 15. ...is not such a bad move, but in comparison to 8...♘xd5, it is a very inefficient move: it concedes what White wants without solving any of Black's problems.

Thus Yusupov-Kamsky, Linares 1991, went 9 ♗d3 ♗b7 10 0-0 ♘bd7 (10...♘e4 11 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 12 ♕b3 ♖d8 13 ♖ac1 is slightly

better for White according to Kasparov; while 10...c5?! 11 ♘e5! ♘bd7 12 ♗f5! ♘xe5 13 dxe5 ♘e8 14 ♗g3 ♘c7 15 ♕g4 was very strong for White in Kasparov-Beliavsky, Candidates match 1983) 11 ♖c1 a6 (11...c5 12 dxc5 bxc5 13 ♗f5! is unpleasant for Black according to Yusupov) 12 ♕b3 (12 ♘e5!?) 12...♖e8 (12...c5 13 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 14 dxc5 ♗xc5 15 ♖fd1 is slightly better for White according to Yusupov) 13 a3 ♖b8?! 14 ♗g3 ♖c8 15 ♗f5 with a very strong position for White.

Game 31
Fischer-Spassky
World Championship 1972

1 c4 e6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 b6 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗xe7

9 ♗g3 is a rarely seen attempt to avoid the main lines. After 9...♗b7 followed by ...c7-c5, Black stands well. On the other hand, 9 ♘xd5 exd5 (9...♗xh4 is given as equal by Karpov) 10 ♗g3!? ♗g4 11 a3 c5 12 dxc5 bxc5 13 ♗e2 ♗f6 14 ♖c1 ♘d7 15 ♕d2 ♕b6 16 b4 led to sharp play in Agdestein-Van der Sterren, Wijk aan Zee 1988.

9...♕xe7 10 ♘xd5

10 ♖c1 ♗b7 leads to the line 8 ♖c1 ♗b7 9 cxd5 ♘xd5 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 (Game 33).

10...exd5 11 ♖c1

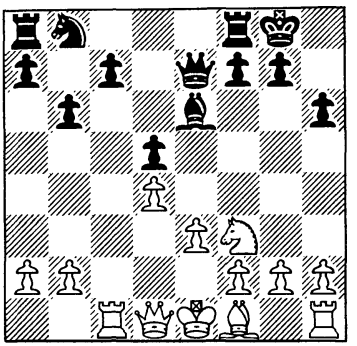
Bringing the rook to the 'battleground' file – the semi-open c-file. Instead 11 ♗d3 c5 12 0-0 ♗e6 13 e4!? ♘d7 14 ♖e1 ♕f6 15 dxc5 ♘xc5 16 e5 ♕f4 17 ♗c2 ♗g4 18 ♕d4! gave White a pleasant initiative in Szabolcsi-Renet, French Team Championship 1998, but 11...♗e6 12 0-0 ♘d7! was safer.

11...♗e6!

see following diagram

Question 15. Err, wait a minute...

Answer 15. Black's first task is to play ...c7-c5. As 11...c5 loses a pawn to 12 dxc5 bxc5 13 ♕xd5 Black must defend his d5-pawn.



Question 16. Granted, but why put the bishop on e6 if you made space for it on b7 with ...b7-b6?

Answer 16. Black's decision to develop his bishop on b7 was taken under different circumstances. Now that White has initiated multiple exchanges and blocked the centre, there is no reason for Black to carry on with the same plan regardless.

Question 17. But isn't ...b7-b6 just a waste then?

Answer 17. Not at all! Even with the bishop on e6, ...b7-b6 supports Black's central break ...c7-c5. There are several important reasons for Black's choice:

1. On b7, the bishop is blocked behind the d5-pawn as White intended; on e6 by contrast, the bishop has prospects along the c8-h3 diagonal – it can move to f5 or g4, for example.

2. Black's play is all going to happen on the queenside – he wants to gain a huge space advantage there by rushing his queenside pawns down the board with ...c5-c4, ..b5-b4 etc. For this purpose, the bishop is better-placed on e6, pointing towards the queenside.

3. Finally, once Black plays ...c7-c5, the bishop is much better placed to deal with White's play on e6 than b7.

Question 18. What is White going to do? Is he going to attack on the kingside?

Answer 18. An all-out kingside attack is

unlikely to succeed due to the number of pieces that Black has managed to exchange. White must concentrate on the main source of tension in the position – the semi-open c-file and the pawn on c5.

Question 19. So how does White do that?

Answer 19. Typically White captures on c5 to concentrate his play against Black's 'hanging pawns' on d5 and c5. Bringing his rooks to the semi-open c- and d-files, White then tries to harass Black's central pawns with his knight.

Question 20. Sounds scary! So how does Black react?

Answer 20. Black plays hard on the queenside! For example, he brings his king's rook to b8 to target the b-pawn, while the other rook supports ...a5-a4 gaining queenside space. Thus we understand why the light-squared bishop is better on e6 than b7: on b7, it merely obstructs Black's b-file counterplay, while on e6 it can even be useful in attacking the a2-pawn at some stage. Moreover, the bishop on e6 adds to the defence of Black's king's position by covering light squares such as f5 and f7.

12 ♕a4

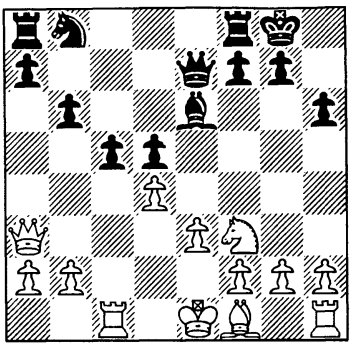
12 ♗d3 c5 13 0-0 ♘d7 14 dxc5 bxc5 15 e4 dxe4 16 ♗xe4 ♖ad8 17 ♗b1 is given by Karpov as slightly better, but it does not seem particularly impressive for White.

12...c5

12...a5!? is Nigel Short's pet idea, playing the useful move ...a7-a5 and at the same time introducing the idea of ...♕e7-b4+. After 13 ♘e5 (13 ♖c3 ♖c8 14 a3 a5 15 ♗b5 ♘d7 16 0-0 ♘f6 17 ♘d2 ♗f5 18 ♖fc1 ♕d6 19 h3 g5!? was fine for Black in Schlosser-Short, Calcutta 1998) 13...♖c8 (13...♕b4+ 14 ♕xb4 axb4 15 ♖xc7 ♖xa2 16 ♘d3 is quite murky) 14 a3 c5 15 ♗b5 ♕g5!? 16 g3 c4 17 0-0, Black had some development problems in Velikov-Short, Slavija-Solingen 1987.

13 ♕a3!

Question 21. That's an interesting way to put pressure on the c5-pawn! Why not simply put the queen on c2?



Answer 21. White wishes to concentrate pressure against Black's c5-pawn; going by the old adage that it is easiest to hit a stationary target, White must immobilise the c5-pawn, or at least dissuade it from advancing. By pinning the c5-pawn to the black queen on e7, White fulfils this goal and thus buys some time in which to finish mobilising the rest of his pieces.

In general the queen is well-placed on a3 – it attacks c5 without getting in the way of White's rooks on the c- and d-files, whilst it also eyes other potential vulnerabilities in Black's queenside: the a-pawn (which will be isolated after the exchange on c5) and the a6-square.

13...♖c8

13...♘d7 14 ♗a6 is annoying according to Karpov.

14 ♗b5!?

The most ambitious move. White tries to intensify his campaign on the c-file.

Question 22. In what way?

Answer 22. Black's ideal defender for the c5-pawn is the knight and its most natural post is the d7-square. 14 ♗b5 gives White the possibility of exchanging off the knight when it comes to d7, thus depriving the c5-pawn of a valuable defender.

The quieter 14 ♗e2 is considered in the next main game.

14...a6?!

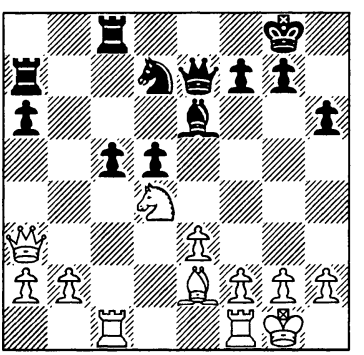
In his game against Timman in Hilversum 1973, Geller demonstrated that 14...♕b7! equalises comfortably for Black. After 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 17 ♕xc5 ♘a6! 18 ♗xa6 (18 ♕c6 ♕xc6 19 ♗xc6 ♖b8! intending 20 b3 ♖c8!) 18...♕xa6 (preventing the white king from castling) 19 ♕a3 ♕c4 20 ♔d2 ♕g4 21 ♖g1 d4! 22 ♘xd4 ♕h4 23 ♖e1 ♕xf2+ 24 ♖e2 ♕f1, Black had a very dangerous attack.

Question 23. If the pawn is too hot, why can't you just play 15 0-0?

Answer 23. After 14...♕b7! the c5-pawn is no longer pinned so 15 0-0 is met by 15...c4! when the bishop on b5 is precariously placed.

After Spassky's inaccuracy, the game loses its theoretical significance, but not its instructional value. It is a classic exposition of White's desires and Black's fears!

15 dxc5 bxc5 16 0-0 ♖a7 17 ♗e2 ♘d7 18 ♘d4!



Brilliant use of White's ♕a4-a3 manoeuvre. From d4, the knight can either retreat to b3 to join in White's pressure against the c-pawn, or capture on e6 as a prelude to a light-square assault.

18...♕f8 19 ♘xe6! fxe6 20 e4! d4 21 f4 ♕e7 22 e5 ♖b8 23 ♗c4 ♔h8 24 ♕h3 ♘f8 25 b3 a5 26 f5 exf5 27 ♖xf5 ♘h7 28 ♖cf1 ♕d8 29 ♕g3 ♖e7 30 h4 ♖bb7 31 e6! ♖bc7 32 ♕e5 ♕e8 33 a4 ♕d8 34 ♖1f2 ♕e8 35 ♖2f3 ♕d8 36 ♗d3 ♕e8 37 ♕e4 ♘f6 38 ♖xf6 gxf6 39 ♖xf6 ♔g8 40 ♗c4 ♔h8 41 ♕f4 1-0

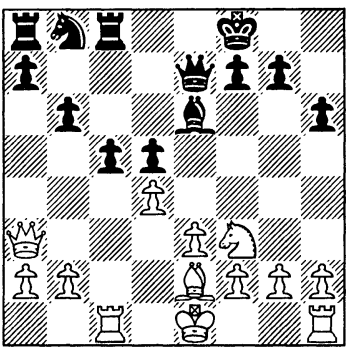
A really powerful game!

Game 32
Winants-Kasparov
Brussels 1987

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 10 ♘xd5 exd5 11 ♖c1 ♗e6! 12 ♕a4 c5 13 ♕a3 ♖c8 14 ♗e2

A safer development of the bishop than 14 ♗b5.

14...♔f8



Question 24. This looks a bit odd.

Answer 24. Black wants to activate his queenside majority; consequently, he must break the pin on the c5-pawn. With 14...♔f8, Black protects his queen on e7, freeing him to play ...c5-c4. Another popular idea is 14...a5 15 0-0 ♕a7.

Question 25. What?

Answer 25. As soon as Black avoids the pin, White will open the centre by capturing on c5 in order to concentrate against Black's hanging pawns. Black will develop counterplay by using the newly-opened b-file to attack White's pawn on b2. Two benefits of Black's plan thus become apparent:

1. The queen is well-placed on a7, ready to move to the b-file.

2. The black a-pawn is ready to advance to a4, making White's b-pawn backward.

Play might continue 16 dxc5 (16 b3 ♘d7 17 ♗b5 ♖c7 18 ♖fd1 ♖ac8 19 h3 [19 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 20 ♘e5 ♖dc7 is fine for Black according to Kharitonov] was agreed drawn in Karpov-Kavalek, Linares 1981) 16...bxc5 17 ♖c3 ♘d7 18 ♖fc1 ♖cb8 19 ♘e1 a4!? (perhaps 19...c4!? or 19...♖b7!?) 20 ♘d3 c4 21 ♘f4 ♕c5! was very complicated in C.Hansen-Schandorff, Danish Championship 1986.

In his annotations, Kasparov criticised 14...♔f8, but I have to say that I quite like this move. The game is again very instructive.

15 dxc5 bxc5 16 0-0 a5! 17 ♖c3! ♘d7 18 ♖fc1 ♖cb8!

Avoiding White's idea of ♘f3-d4.

19 ♖b3!

19 b3 a4! 20 bxa4 c4! equalises according to Kasparov. The text is a typical idea, dampening Black's counterplay by exchanging a pair of rooks.

19...c4?!

19...a4! 20 ♖xb8+ ♖xb8 21 ♗d1 c4! 22 ♗xa4 ♕xa3 23 bxa3 ♘c5 is the way to equalise according to Kasparov.

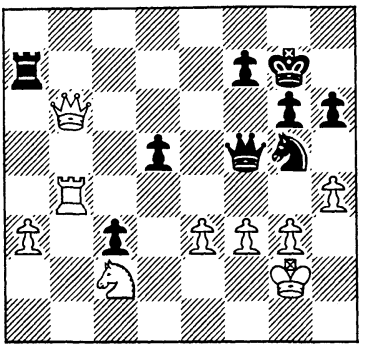
20 ♖xb8+ ♖xb8 21 ♕xa5 ♖xb2 22 ♘d4 ♔g8 23 ♖a1 ♘c5 24 ♕a8+ ♔h7 25 ♕a3 ♖b6 26 ♗d1 g6 27 ♗c2 ♗d7 28 h3 ♕d6 29 ♕a5 ♗a4 30 ♗xa4 ♖a6 31 ♕b5 ♖xa4 32 a3 c3 33 ♘c2 ♕c7 34 ♖b1 ♖a7 35 ♕e8 ♖b7 36 ♖b4 ♔g7 37 g3 ♘e6 38 ♕a4 ♘g5 39 h4 ♘e4 40 ♔g2 ♖a7 41 ♕b5 ♕e5! 42 ♕b6 ♕f5 43 f3 ♘g5!!

This leads to a stunning finish!

see following diagram

44 hxg5 ♕xc2+ 45 ♔g1 ♕d1+ 46 ♔g2 ♕e2+ 47 ♔h3 ♕xf3!! 48 ♕xa7 ♕h1+ 49 ♔g4 h5+ 50 ♔f4 ♕f1+ 51 ♔e5 ♕f5+ 52 ♔d6 ♕e6+ 53 ♔c7 ♕e7+ 54 ♔b6 ♕xa7+ 55 ♔xa7 c2! 0-1

Since this line promises very little, White players have tried a subtle move order to improve it: **8 ♖c1 ♗b7** and only then **9 cxd5.**



Question 26. So what's the difference?

Answer 26. As we saw previously, Black's desired post for his light-squared bishop in the hanging pawns structure is e6; on b7 the bishop would both block Black's b-file counterplay, and itself be blocked along the a8-h1 diagonal by the pawn on d5. By delaying his capture on d5, White hopes to reach the same pawn structure with Black's bishop already committed to the inferior b7-square.

Question 27. How bad is that for Black?

Answer 27. While it is nothing heart-stopping, small advantages are built on the accumulation of such details so Black should not readily accept this type of concession.

Game 33
Korchnoi-Short
Wijk aan Zee 1990

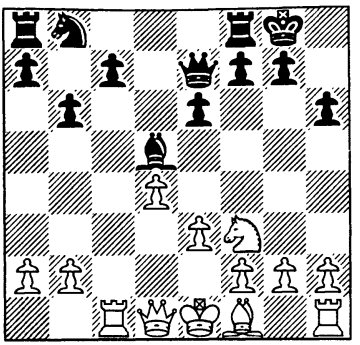
1 c4 e6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♗g5 ♗e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♘f3 h6 7 ♗h4 b6 8 ♖c1 ♗b7 9 cxd5 ♘xd5 10 ♗xe7

10 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 11 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 transposes.

10...♕xe7 11 ♘xd5 ♗xd5!

Black uses the move order to his advantage as well! This recapture ensures the activity of the light-squared bishop by keeping the a8-h1 diagonal open. Moreover, from d5 the bishop eyes White's unprotected

a2-pawn! Black's task is now to liquidate his backward c-pawn with ...c7-c5.



12 ♗e2

12 ♗d3 ♖c8 13 0-0 c5 14 dxc5 ♖xc5 15 ♖xc5 ♕xc5 16 ♕a4 ♘c6! 17 e4 ♘b4! 18 exd5 ♘xd3 19 dxe6 fxe6 20 b3 ♖d8 21 ♕e4 ♕f5 led to a draw in Uhlmann-Spassky, Solingen 1974, as did Vaganian-Short, Elista Olympiad 1998, after 12 ♗c4 ♗b7 13 0-0 ♖c8! 14 ♘e5 ♘d7 15 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 16 ♗e2 ♖ab8 17 b3 ♕e7 18 ♗f3.

12...c5!

This excellent idea of Short's has superseded the older 12...♖c8 13 0-0 c5 14 dxc5 ♖xc5 15 ♖xc5 ♕xc5 16 ♕a4 ♗c6 (unlike after 12 ♗d3, here 16...♘c6 17 e4! does win a piece) 17 ♕f4 with a small edge for White.

13 dxc5 ♖d8!

Short also tried the more committal 13...bxc5 in a rapid game in Garmisch 1994, against Brunner when 14 ♕a4 ♘d7 15 0-0 ♖fb8 16 ♖c2 a5 17 ♖fc1 ♖b4 kept the balance for Black.

14 ♕a4

14 ♕c2 ♖c8 15 ♕d2 ♖xc5 16 ♖xc5 ♕xc5 17 0-0 ♘c6 18 ♖c1 was agreed drawn in Dautov-Yusupov, Bad Homburg 1998, while 14 0-0 ♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 ♖xd1 16 ♖fxd1 ♘c6! is also fine for Black according to Ftacnik. The text is a little too ambitious.

14...♘d7! 15 e4 ♘xc5 16 ♖xc5 ♕xc5 17 exd5 ♕c1+ 18 ♗d1 ♖xd5 19 0-0 ♕xb2

Black is slightly better according to Ftacnik.

20 ♗b3 ♖c5 21 ♕a6 ♖c7 22 g3 ♖d8 23 ♖e1 ♖c1 24 ♕xa7 ♖xe1+ 25 ♘xe1 ♕e2 26 ♘c2 ♖d1+ ½-½

As White gains little from the early release of central tension, modern practice has concentrated on the normal developing moves 8 ♗e2 and 8 ♗d3. Black now faces a major choice – whether to take on c4, or whether to maintain his centre with 8...♗b7 for example.

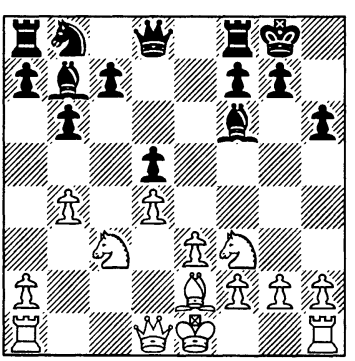
Question 28. I can't see what could be wrong with 8...♗b7!

Answer 28. The issue is whether Black wishes to play the structures arising after, for example, 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5, or whether he is willing to forego a little flexibility with 8...dxc4 to avoid this possibility altogether (as seen in the next chapter).

Question 29. Which is the best?

Answer 29. Black's most popular move is 8...♗b7. When it has the faith of players such as Kramnik, Kasparov and Spassky, it is probably a good choice!

We shall first examine the main line **8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6!? ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4.**



Question 30. Wait, hang on a minute! I don't understand a thing! What is White doing?

Answer 30. The moves 9 ♗xf6 and 10

cxd5 form a disruptive manoeuvre against Black's development. There are three intended consequences:

1. The passivity of Black's light-squared bishop.

2. The weakening of Black's kingside light squares.

3. The deterrence of Black's freeing break ...c7-c5.

White has clearly realised the first objective. With 9 ♗xf6, White ensured that his opponent could no longer meet c4xd5 with ...♘f6xd5 keeping the a8-h1 diagonal open, but rather had to block the range of the light-squared bishop on b7 by recapturing on d5 with the e-pawn.

Question 31. Granted, but why does White play ♗g5-h4xf6? Couldn't he have saved time by playing ♗g5xf6 as soon as Black played ...h7-h6?

Answer 31. White's judgement is that this plan became dangerous only after Black had committed himself to ...b7-b6 on the queenside. In other words, White contends that the extra move ...b7-b6 is more helpful to White than to his opponent. This is a typical example of a positional trade-off in the opening. White loses a little time and gives up the bishop pair, but in return he makes concrete gains in his fight against Black's plans and pieces.

Black's kingside light squares are weakened in two ways:

1. The e-pawn has been diverted from e6 to d5, so that the f5-square is now available to the white pieces.

2. The knight on f6, which defended h7, has been exchanged.

Question 32. How does White's plan help against Black's freeing break?

Answer 32. In order to achieve ...c7-c5 comfortably, both the d5- and c5-squares require a certain level of support.

Question 33. So how has this manoeuvre affected the d5-pawn?

Answer 33. Obviously the removal of Black's knight on f6 weakens Black's defence of his centre (this also means incidentally that Black can no longer use the Lasker manoeuvre ...♘f6-e4 to free his position by exchanging two sets of minor pieces). Moreover, since the dark-squared bishop has been dragged on to f6, some reorganisation will be needed before Black's knight on b8 can replace its fallen comrade.

Question 34. Isn't the bishop just good on f6, raking along the long diagonal?

Answer 34. I know that it sort of looks like a KID bishop, but...! Currently it is just biting against White's pawn chain. In this structure, the bishop should be on d6, freeing f6 for the queen's knight and supporting ...c7-c5, while at the same time eyeing the h2-square and giving Black some future hope for kingside action.

Question 35. And how does White's manoeuvre affect the c5-square?

Answer 35. After ...♗e7xf6, the bishop no longer supports ...c7-c5. In essence, 9 ♗xf6 disrupts the harmony of Black's development which gives White the opportunity for 11 b4.

Question 36. So what is the point of 11 b4?

Answer 36. Exploiting the fact that ♗h4xf6 deflected Black's dark-squared bishop from the f8-a3 diagonal, White brings pawn pressure to bear upon the black structure. (Of course, this idea ♗h4xf6 followed by b2-b4 is very reminiscent of the minority attack in the Exchange QGD.) 11 b4 has two aims:

1. White brings more pressure to bear on c5 and hopes to deter Black from achieving his freeing break ...c7-c5.

2. White may follow up with b4-b5 clamping down on c6. If Black were then to play ...c7-c5, then b5xc6 would leave Black with a weak isolated d-pawn.

Question 37. Is that so serious?

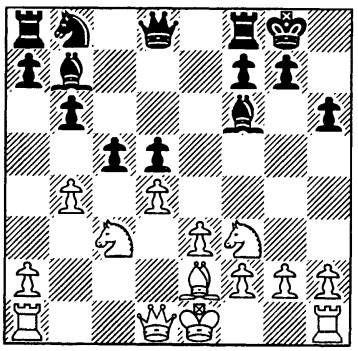
Answer 37. It won't lead to an immediate loss, but it is a concession you'd rather avoid. The most economical method of protecting a pawn is by another pawn. If a piece is used,

this defensive duty will inevitably reduce the activity of that piece and will lead to a slight reduction in the activity of your whole position. This illustrates the structural drawback to ...b7-b6. Were the pawn on b7, then b4-b5 would not carry the same force.

Question 38. I have two points. Firstly, is it terrible for Black if he doesn't achieve ...c7-c5?

Answer 38. Of course not – as we shall see, the patient 11...c6 is Kramnik's favourite move in this position. However, it can then be said that White has achieved something with his manoeuvre ♗h4xf6. In return for the bishop pair, he's kept the light-squared bishop quiet and stopped Black from playing his freeing break. 'The game goes on' as Julian Hodgson always says, but at least White can feel that he has achievements to build on.

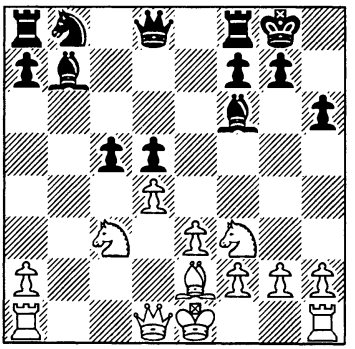
Question 39. OK, now my other question. Can't Black just play **11...c5** immediately?



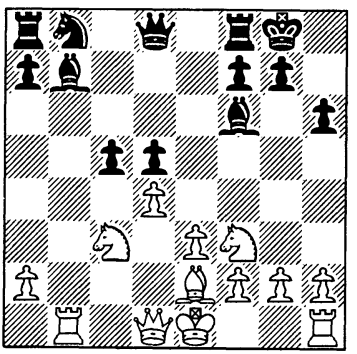
Answer 39. He certainly can! This is Kasparov's favourite move. As we saw earlier, 9 ♗xf6 disrupts the harmony of Black's pieces so that they are unsuited to the current pawn structure; for example, the bishop on f6 would be better on d6 etc. Black has two choices – to manoeuvre his pieces to fit the structure or to change the pawn structure altogether. 11...c5 espouses the latter approach: Black goes for his freeing break and makes use of his pieces where they stand. 11...c5 makes use of the bishop on f6 which combines with ...c7-c5 against the pinned d4-pawn.

Question 40. So isn't this just the logical continuation?

Answer 40. It certainly is but after 11 b4, it is not without positional risk. After **12 bxc5 bxc5**



Black's pawn structure has been 'diluted'. Now once White achieves d4xc5, Black will have to accept an isolated d-pawn rather than the hanging pawns we have seen until now. Secondly, with b4xc5, White opens the b-file. This allows him to harass the restricted bishop on b7 (how Black would prefer it to be on e6!) with **13 ♖b1**.



Question 41. Oh dear! Is this just good for White then?

Answer 41. Not so fast! Now look at the position from Black's side! White hopes lie in

his firmer structure and the slight disruption he can cause in Black's queenside development. However, Black has the two bishops, a spacious position with room for all his pieces, and just the later possibility of an IQP. With only one weakness and an otherwise pleasant position, Black should not fall into serious trouble.

Question 42. All the same, I get the feeling that you don't really like this as much as 11...c6!

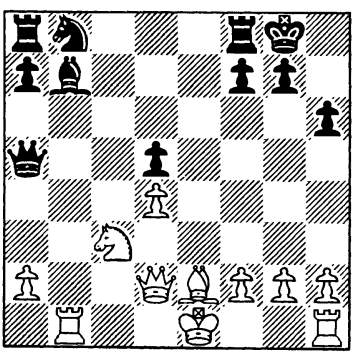
Answer 42. It's true! In this line, Black is playing single-mindedly for a draw. It seems a strange thing to do when the positions after 11...c6 are so rich and interesting. However, if Kasparov gives it his seal of approval in World Championship matches, then it is obviously a pretty good move!

Game 34
Azmaiparashvili-Short
Manila Olympiad 1992

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 b6 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 c5 12 bxc5 bxc5 13 ♖b1 ♕a5?!

The more accurate 13...♗c6 is the subject of Games 35-37.

14 ♕d2 cxd4 15 ♘xd4 ♗xd4!? 16 exd4!



Best as 16 ♕xd4 ♘c6 17 ♕d2 d4! 18 exd4 ♗a6! preventing 19 0-0 due to 19...♗xe2 20 ♕xe2 ♕xc3 is slightly better for Black according to Geller.

Question 43. This doesn't make any sense for Black!

Answer 43. In fact, this is Black's main idea in these positions!

Question 44. What?

Answer 44. At the cost of the bishop pair, Black creates an IQP in White's position, equalising the pawn structure. This greatly relieves the pressure on Black's d-pawn by shutting the semi-open d-file. White's only remaining (and very small) positional edge is his slightly better bishop – Black's bishop is on the same colour as his IQP.

Question 45. So why is 13...♕a5 dubious if it forces the plan that Black wants?

Answer 45. The problem is the time that Black has taken to force this structure. As we shall see, White will gain time on Black's queen as well as Black's light-squared bishop. This gives White's knight the chance to reach an aggressive outpost it could normally never achieve.

Question 46. Why is this so important?

Answer 46. The absence of both b-pawns from the queenside structure leaves both knights unsettled on their natural squares c3 and c6; as they lack the usual support of pawns on b2 or b7, they are vulnerable to pressure along the open c-file. The time that White gains on his opponent's pieces allows him to solve his problem before Black. This factor is not a decisive one, but it makes Black's task an unenviable one, particularly against the kind of technique that 'Azmai' shows!

16...♗a6

16...♗c6 was nicely met by 17 ♘d1! in Chernin-Beliavsky, Debrecen 1992. After 17...♕xd2+ (17...♕d8 18 0-0 with ♘d1-e3, ♗e2-f3 and ♖f1-c1 to follow is better for White according to Chernin) 18 ♔xd2 ♘d7 (unlike his opponent, Black cannot develop any pressure against the IQP as his bishop prevents the knight from coming to c6) 19 ♖c1! ♖ac8 20 ♗a6 ♖c7 21 ♘e3 ♘b8 22 ♗e2

♖b7 23 ♖b1 ♖d8 24 ♗f3 ♘a6 25 ♖xb7 ♗xb7, 26 ♖b1! ♗c6 27 ♖c1 ♗b7 28 ♖c3 followed by ♖a3-a5 would have given White a clear advantage according to Chernin.

17 ♘b5 ♕d8

17...♘c6 18 ♕xa5 ♘xa5 19 ♘c7 ♗xe2 20 ♘xa8 ♗d3 (20...♖e8 21 ♘c7!) 21 ♖d1 ♖e8+ 22 ♔d2 wins for White. Consequently, the black queen must retreat.

18 0-0 ♘c6

18...♘d7 19 ♖fc1 ♘f6 20 f3!? ♖e8 21 a4 ♖e7 22 ♗d3 was very pleasant for White in Vaganian-Geller, New York 1990.

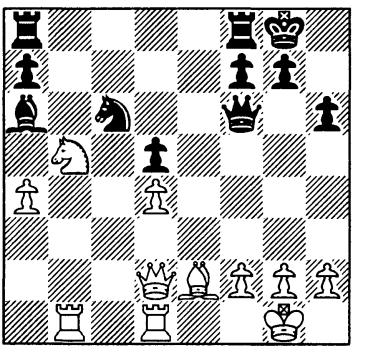
19 a4

A slightly unusual move order - **19 ♖fd1** ♕f6 20 a4 is more common.

19...♕f6

Azmai suggests 19...♕g5!?

20 ♖fd1



20...♖fd8?!

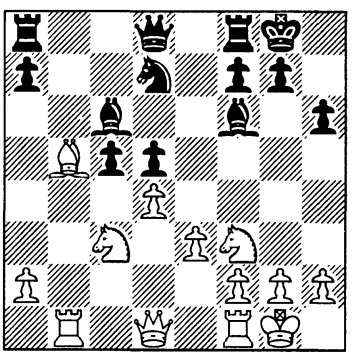
20...♖ab8 21 ♗f1 ♗c8! as in Lobron-Kir.Georgiev, Tilburg 1992, seems Black's best try to reactivate the bishop along the h7-b1 diagonal and to drive the knight from b5 with ...a7-a6. After 22 ♖bc1 a6 23 ♘c7 ♕d6 24 ♕c3 ♕xc7 25 ♕xc6 ♕xc6 26 ♖xc6 ♖b4 27 a5 ♖a4 28 ♖dc1 (28 ♗xa6 ♗e6 29 ♗b7 ♖xa5 30 ♖c5 ♖a4 31 ♗c6 ♖b4 32 ♗xd5 ♖d8 33 ♗xe6 fxe6 was equal in Kir.Georgiev-Kotronias, Burgas 1992) 28...♗e6 29 ♖xa6 ♖b8 30 ♖d1 g5 31 f3 ♖bb4 32 ♖a7 ♖xd4 33 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 34 a6 ♔g7 35 ♖c7 ♖a4 Black just about held the balance. After the text, Azmai takes control!

21 ♖b3! ♖ac8 22 h3! ♕g5 23 ♕xg5 hxg5 24 ♖g3! f6 25 ♗g4 ♖b8 26 ♖c3 ♖b6?! 27 ♖c5 ♗xb5 28 axb5 ♘a5 29 ♖e1! ♔f8 30 ♗h5 ♖bb8 31 ♖c7 ♖b7 32 ♖ee7 ♖xc7 33 ♖xc7 ♘b3 34 ♖f7+ ♔g8 35 ♖xa7 ♖b8 36 ♗g6 ♘xd4 37 b6 ♘c6 38 ♖c7 ♘d8 39 ♖d7 ♔f8 40 ♖xd5 ♔e7 41 ♖b5 ♘b7 42 ♗h5 ♘d6 43 ♖b4 ♔d7 44 ♗f3 g6 45 ♔h2 ♘c8 46 b7 ♘d6 47 h4 gxh4 48 ♖xh4 ♘xb7 49 ♖h7+ ♔c8 50 ♖f7 ♘d6 51 ♖xf6 ♔d7 52 ♗g4+ ♔c7 53 ♖xg6 ♖b2 54 f3 1-0

Black players have lost faith in the forcing 13...♕a5, turning instead to the calmer 13...♗c6 which aims for simple development.

Game 35
Topalov-Kasparov
Sofia (rapidplay match) 1998

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 b6 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 c5 12 bxc5 bxc5 13 ♖b1 ♗c6 14 0-0 ♘d7 15 ♗b5



Question 47. This looks wrong: why is White swapping off his 'good' bishop for Black's 'bad' one?

Answer 47. This terminology is sometimes misleading. Black's bishop is technically 'bad' as it is on the same colour as Black's central

d5-pawn. However, the task it performs within Black's position – as the only defender of Black's d5-pawn – is an absolutely pivotal one. White's bishop, though technically 'good', performs no useful function on e2. Consequently, White should consider 15 ♗b5 as the trade of an underemployed piece for a key defensive unit.

Question 48. But if Black exchanges his 'bad' bishop, then he has lost one positional worry!

Answer 48. Absolutely, but White can claim that he has also made an existing one worse – the d5-pawn is much more vulnerable!

Instead 15 ♕d2 c4! 16 ♘e1 ♕a5 17 ♘c2 ♖ab8 18 ♗f3 ♘c5! 19 ♘e4 ♕xd2 20 ♘xd2 c3 21 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 22 ♖b1 ♖c8 23 ♘b3 ♘e4 was pleasant for Black in Dokhoian-Pigusov, USSR 1985.

15...♕c7 16 ♕d3!

An excellent square for the queen. It aims for f5 (attacking d5) as well as b5 (after a preliminary ♗b5xc6) while keeping the c-file free for a white rook. White can also line up against d5 with ♖f1-d1.

16 ♕a4 (intensifying the pressure on the bishop) 16...♘b6 17 ♕a5 cxd4 18 exd4 ♖fc8 19 ♗xc6 (19 ♗a6 ♘c4! was fine for Black in the game Eingorn-Lputian, Dortmund 1988) 19...♕xc6 20 ♖b3 ♕c4 was fairly level in Salov-Hjartarson, Belgrade 1987.

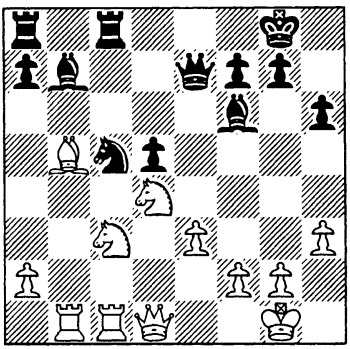
16...♖fc8

The most active move, preparing to place the rooks on the a- and b-files. Vaganian-Kir.Georgiev, President's Cup, Elista 1998, saw 16...♖fd8 17 ♖fc1 (17 ♖fd1 ♖ab8 18 ♗xc6 ♕xc6 19 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 20 dxc5 ♗xc3 21 ♕xc3 ♕xc5 22 ♕xc5 ♘xc5 23 h3 ♘e4 24 ♖xd5 ♖b1+ 25 ♔h2 ♘xf2 26 ♖d8+ ♔h7 27 ♖d7 a5 28 ♖xf7 ♖b2 29 a4 ♘d1 with sufficient counterplay for Black in Karpov-Kasparov, World Championship 1985) 17...c4!? (17...♖ac8 18 h3 g6 19 ♗xc6 ♕xc6 20 ♕b5 cxd4 21 ♕xc6 ♖xc6 was fine for Black in Groszpeter-Vaganian, World Blitz Championship 1988) 18 ♕f5 ♘b6 (18...g6!?) 19 a4 a6 20 ♗xc6 ♕xc6 21 a5 ♘a4 22 ♘e2! when Black's offside knight on a4 gave cause for concern.

17 h3

This quiet move gives Black an opportunity to implement a typical equalising manoeuvre. The more testing 17 ♖fc1 and 17 ♖fd1 are considered in the next two main games.

17...cxd4! 18 ♘xd4 ♗b7! 19 ♖fc1 ♘c5 20 ♕d1 ♕e7

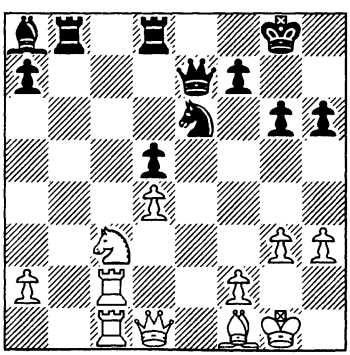


The position is about level – Black's activity and two bishops compensate for the IQP.

21 ♕g4 g6 22 ♗f1 ♗g7 23 ♕d1 ♖ab8 24 ♖c2 ♗a8 25 ♖bc1 ♖d8 26 g3 ♗xd4

This typical idea again!

27 exd4 ♘e6!



In contrast to the 13...♕a5 line, Black's

knight finds an ideal outpost on e6 from which to attack the d4-pawn.

28 h4 ♕f6 29 ♘e2 ♖b4 30 ♖c8 ♗b7 31 ♖xd8+ ♘xd8 32 ♕d2 ♖a4 33 ♕xh6 ♖xa2 34 ♕e3 ♘e6 35 ♖b1 ♗c6 36 ♕h6 ♕d8 37 ♕e3 ♕f6 38 ♕b3 ♖d2 39 ♕e3 ♘xd4 40 ♘f4 ♕e5 41 ♕a3 ♔g7 42 ♖c1 ♗b5 43 ♖c8 ♗e8 44 ♕c3 ♗d7 45 ♖d8 ♖d1 46 ♖xd7 ♕e4 47 ♖xd5 ♖xf1+ 0-1

Game 36
Khalifman-Chandler
German Bundesliga 1995

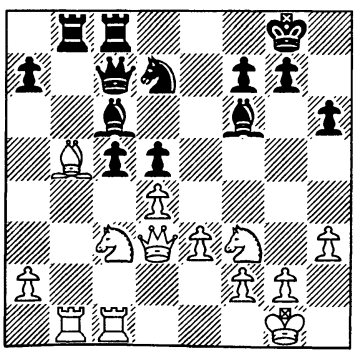
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 b6 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 c5 12 bxc5 bxc5 13 ♖b1 ♗c6 14 0-0 ♘d7 15 ♗b5 ♕c7 16 ♕d3 ♖fc8 17 ♖fc1

White's most natural move, placing the rook opposite the queen on c7.

17...♖ab8!?

Kasparov suggests 17...♗xb5 18 ♘xb5 ♕c6, when 19 dxc5 ♘xc5 20 ♕f5 (20 ♕a3 ♗e7 seems fine for Black) transposes into Kasparov-Karpov, World Championship 1984 (White had played 16 ♕c2) when 20...♕e6 21 ♘fd4 ♕xf5 22 ♘xf5 ♘e6 23 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 24 ♘xa7 ♖c2 25 ♘b5 ♖xa2 26 h3 ♖a5 was agreed drawn.

18 h3



18...c4

Alternatively:

a) 18...cxd4 19 ♘xd5 ♗xb5 20 ♖xc7 ♗xd3 21 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 22 ♖xd7 dxe3 23 ♘xf6+ gxf6 24 fxe3 ♗e4 25 ♖xa7 is given as slightly better for White by Kasparov.

b) 18...g6 19 ♗xc6 ♖xb1 20 ♕xb1! ♕xc6 21 dxc5 ♕xc5 22 ♘e2 ♕f8 was Kasparov-Karpov, World Championship 1987, and now according to Kasparov 23 ♘f4 ♘b6 24 h4! h5 25 ♖xc8 ♕xc8 26 ♘xg6! fxg6 27 ♕xg6+ ♗g7 28 ♘g5 ♕d7 29 ♕xh5 is clearly better for White.

The text, gaining queenside space and creating a protected passed c-pawn, is another Kasparov suggestion.

Question 49. What do you think of this move?

Answer 49. Instinctively it seems rather repulsive to me! It goes against an opening principle that I learnt from books as a child – that in such positions, releasing the central tension with ...c5-c4 is always bad.

Question 50. Why is that?

Answer 50. The tension between the pawn on c5 and White's pawn on d4 represents Black's main source of influence over White's position. Inevitably therefore, its release offers the white pieces some extra chances for activity: for example, utilising this pressure, Black dictates that his opponent's knight should remain on f3 so that White can recapture with a piece after ...c5xd4.

Question 51. So now that Black has played ...c5-c4...

Answer 51. White can move this knight as he pleases, perhaps to initiate some kingside play. In the same way, White's e-pawn is tied to the defence of the d4-pawn by the pawn on c5. After ...c5-c4, White gains the option of central play with the e3-e4 break. It is clear that ...c5-c4 has major positional repercussions.

Question 52. So is it just bad then?

Answer 52. Let's consider it in this specific position. White cannot use the e5-outpost for his knight due to Black's bishop on f6 and knight on d7. Moreover, there seems

little immediate prospect of kingside action by White – Black's kingside is solid, and the exchange of the dark-squared bishop robs White of kingside firepower.

Question 53. How about the central break?

Answer 53. This is more dangerous: e3-e4 mines the d5-pawn and undermines Black's c4-pawn. But on the other hand, it will not be a decisive blow by itself.

It is also very important to consider the queenside situation. In normal positions, another major argument against ...c5-c4 is that Black cannot find sufficient counterplay on the queenside to compensate for White's added freedom on the kingside and in the centre. The exchange of the b-pawns invalidates this argument here.

Question 54. You mean that Black can use the b-file for counterplay.

Answer 54. Not only that – White's queenside dark-squares are also greatly weakened by the absence of a pawn on b2. For example, though White's knight on c3 is well-placed, blockading Black's protected passed pawn and attacking the d5-pawn, it is vulnerable to attack by ...♕c7-a5 and ...♗f6-e7-b4.

Question 55. I suppose that ...c5-c4 also makes the d5-pawn safer.

Answer 55. In a way, yes. Black removes the possibility of d4xc5, opening up the d-file against the d5-pawn. However, the corollary to this is that if White does win the d5-pawn, then the c4-pawn will inevitably drop off and Black will be two pawns down and lost.

Question 56. But Black can lose the IQP as well!

Answer 56. Yes, but this is one of the beauties of IQP positions: you always have chances as the rest of your position is sound, and there are open files on which your pieces can seek activity. After ...c5-c4, Black does not have this 'safety valve'.

Question 57. So after all that, is 18...c4 good or not?

Answer 57. It's risky, but it's playable I think!

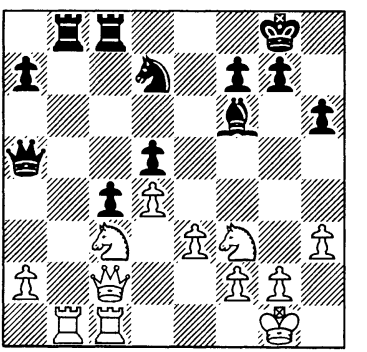
19 ♕c2

19 ♕f5 g6 20 ♕f4 ♕xf4 21 exf4 ♗xb5 22 ♘xb5 ♘f8 is nice for Black according to Khalifman.

19...♗xb5

19...♗a8 is given an exclamation mark by Kasparov. Khalifman recommends 20 ♕f5 ♘b6 21 e4 'with an initiative', but after 21...dxe4 22 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 23 ♕xe4 ♕d6 I don't see a great deal for White.

20 ♘xb5 ♕a5 21 ♘c3



23...♖xb1

This leads to a nice endgame edge for White. Khalifman recommends 21...g6!? when 22 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 23 e4 dxe4 24 ♘xe4 ♖c8! 25 ♘d6 ♖c6 26 ♘xc4 ♕d5 offers good compensation for the pawn.

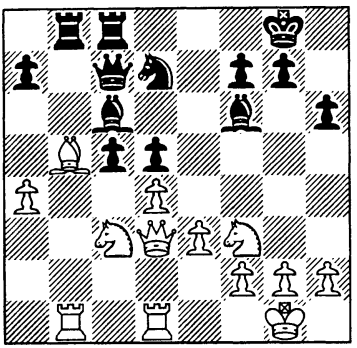
22 ♖xb1 ♖b8 23 ♖xb8+ ♘xb8 24 e4! dxe4 25 ♘xe4 ♕d5 26 ♘xf6+ gxf6 27 ♘d2! ♕xd4 28 ♘xc4 ♘c6 29 ♘e3 ♕a1+ 30 ♔h2 ♕e5+ 31 g3 ♘d4 32 ♕c8+ ♔g7 33 ♕d7 ♘f3+ 34 ♔g2 ♘g5 35 ♕g4 h5 36 ♕f5 ♘e6 37 h4 ♘d4 38 ♕d3 ♔g8 39 ♔f1 ♔f8 40 ♔g2 ♔g8 41 ♔f1 f5 42 ♕c4 f4 43 ♕d5 ♕xd5 44 ♘xd5 fxg3 45 fxg3 ♔g7 46 ♔f2 ♔g6 47 ♔e3 ♘f5+ 48 ♔f4 f6 49 ♔f3 ♔g7 50 ♘f4 ♔h6 51 ♘e2 ♘d6 52 ♔e3 ♔g6 53 ♘f4+ ♔h6 54 ♔d3! ♘f5 55 ♘e2 ♔g6 56 ♔e4 ♘e7 57 ♘f4+ ♔h6 58 a3 ♘c8 59 ♔d5 ♘b6+ 60 ♔c6 ♘c4 61 a4 ♘d2 62 a5 ♘e4 63 ♔b7 ♘xg3 64 ♔xa7 ♘f5 65 a6 1-0

Game 37
Timman-Kasparov
Prague (match) 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 b6 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 0-0 ♘d7 12 b4 c5 13 bxc5 bxc5 14 ♖b1 ♗c6 15 ♗b5 ♕c7 16 ♕d3 ♖fc8 17 ♖fd1

Lining up on the d5-pawn.

17...♖ab8 18 a4!?



18...cxd4! 19 ♘xd4 ♘c5 20 ♕f5 ♗xd4! 21 exd4

21 ♖xd4 ♘e6 22 ♖dd1 d4 23 exd4 ♗xg2 leads to great complications.

21...g6! 22 ♕f3

22 ♕h3 ♘xa4! 23 ♗xa4 ♖xb1 24 ♖xb1 ♗xa4 25 ♘xa4 ♕c1+ wins for Black.

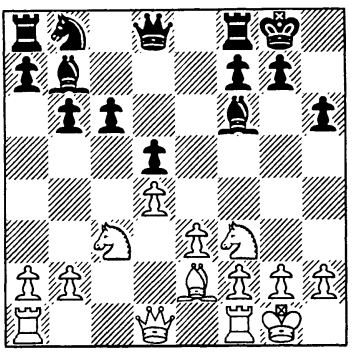
22...♘e4 23 ♘xe4 dxe4 24 ♕e3 ♕d7 25 d5 ♗xb5 26 axb5 ♖xb5 27 ♖xb5 ♕xb5 28 h4 ♕a4 29 ♖e1 ♖d8 30 h5 g5 31 ♕c5 ♕a2 32 ♖d1 ♕e2 33 ♕d4 ♖b8 34 ♕d2 ♕xd2 35 ♖xd2 ♖a8 36 ♖d4 f5 37 g4 ♔f7 38 gxf5 ♔f6 39 ♖xe4 ♔xf5 40 ♖e7 a5 ½-½

We now turn our attention to Kramnik's preferred choice: **11...c6.**

see following diagram

Question 58. This looks like a strange move.

Answer 58. 11...c6 is a 'halfway' holding move. While Black doesn't wish to loosen his position with the immediate 11...c5, he has to act against the threat of b4-b5, clamping down on c6 and isolating the d5-pawn from the support of the c-pawn. After 11...c6, Black is ready to meet 12 b5 with 12...c5.



Question 59. What are the drawbacks to 11...c6?

Answer 59. Black provides a target for White with his backward c-pawn and also continues his cruelty to his bishop on b7, which is now blocked along the a8-h1 diagonal by not one but two black pawns! As 11...c6 cuts off the support of the bishop for the d5-pawn, White gains the chance to break in the centre with e3-e4.

Question 60. Sounds nasty!

Answer 60. It can be very dangerous for Black, but it is not without its risks for White as this central break inevitably opens lines for Black's two bishops.

Question 61. So what is the upside?

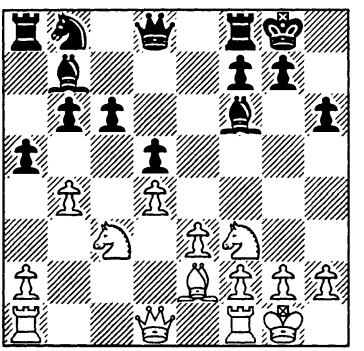
Answer 61. In contrast to the 11...c5 line, which loosens Black's position, 11...c6 concedes nothing to White. White still has to work hard to create a real target in Black's position.

It is a riskier move for Black, however. After 11...c5 Black says 'Well, I might have a weakness or two, but I've played my freeing break. I have space for all my pieces so nothing too terrible can happen to me.' With

a move like 11...c6 where Black delays his freeing break, and restricts one of his pieces just to hold back White's plan and avoid weaknesses, the risk of being sat on after a few inaccurate moves is much greater. On the other hand, Black's winning chances are immeasurably enhanced!

Game 38
Topalov-Kramnik
Linares 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 c6 12 0-0 a5



Question 62. I wasn't expecting that one!

Answer 62. The b4-pawn is a key part of White's queenside set-up: by deterring ...c7-c5, it has acted as a brake on Black's queenside ambitions while providing White with the future break b4-b5 against Black's queenside structure. 12...a5 challenges the b-pawn before White is active enough to make use of its potential.

The slower 12...♕d6 is the subject of Game 44.

13 b5

The direct option: White immediately loosens his opponent's centre by striking immediately at the c6-pawn. The alternatives are 13 bxa5 (Games 39 and 40) and 13 a3 (Games 41-43).

13...c5

Question 63. What has 13 b5 achieved?

Answer 63. White reaps the following benefits:

1. He softens up Black's central and queenside light squares, gaining an outpost for a knight on c6 while depriving Black's d-pawn of the support of the c-pawn.

2. He fixes the b6-pawn as a future target for a knight on a4.

However, by taking the b-pawn from b2 to b5, White weakens a host of queenside dark squares which is particularly important as Black holds the bishop pair. Moreover, as the b6-pawn is so easy to defend, by closing the position, White leaves himself with only one real one target: the d5-pawn. Whichever way he tries to attack it, he cannot win it by force; consequently, Black has a good position since the rest of his position is fine – he has no other structural weaknesses and has the two bishops in hand for later.

14 ♖e1

In this game, Topalov tries for flexible manoeuvring, whereas in Gretarsson-Yusupov, World Championship 1997, White tried to isolate his opponent's d-pawn with 14 ♖c1 (protecting the knight on c3 and intending 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 ♘a4!) 14...♘d7 15 dxc5 (forcing the isolation of Black's d-pawn) 15...♘xc5 16 ♘d4 ♖c8!

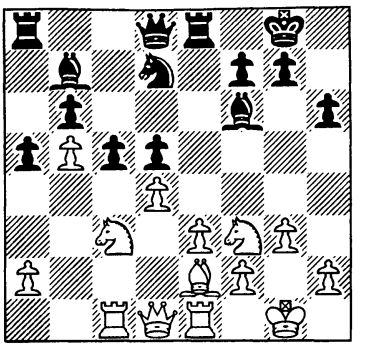
Question 64. Why is 16...♖c8 important?

Answer 64. The white pawn on b5 is not an asset in IQP positions, due to its effect on the knight on c3. Without a pawn on b2 to support it, the knight is unstable on the open c-file; moreover, it cannot move to its natural b5-square since the pawn occupies this square. Obviously therefore, the queen's rook belongs on the open c-file. It must be played there on this move, otherwise after 16...♕d6, then 17 ♗g4! is as in Nikolic-Beliavsky, Groningen 1993, is rather annoying. After 16...♖c8 17 ♗g4 ♖c7 18 ♘a4 ♘e4 19 ♕d3 ♖c4 Black stood very well.

14...♖e8

Kramnik is obviously not very impressed by White's plan, recommending simply 14...♘d7 as equal.

15 ♖c1 ♘d7 16 g3



16...♘f8

After this, Black is forced to release the central tension, but even this seems fine for him. 16...♖c8 17 ♗f1 cxd4 18 ♘xd4 ♘c5 19 ♗g2 ♘e4 is another Vladimir Kramnik suggestion.

17 ♘a4 c4 18 ♗f1 ♕d6?!

The queen is misplaced here according to Kramnik - 18...♕c7 19 ♗g2 ♖ad8 20 ♘c3 g6 is still equal. The battle now becomes very murky.

19 ♗g2 ♖ad8 20 h4 ♘e6 21 ♘c3 g6 22 ♘d2

Gaining a tempo with the threat of ♘d2xc4 - this is why 18...♕c7 was more precise.

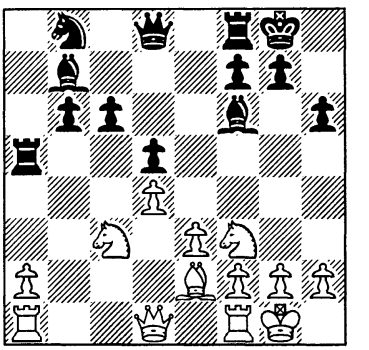
22...♗a8 23 h5

23 f4!? ♗g7 24 ♘f3, intending ♘e5, is suggested as slightly better for White by Kramnik.

23...g5 24 ♘f1 ♗e7 25 g4 ♕d7 26 ♘g3 ♘g7 27 a4 ♗b4 28 ♗h3 ♗b7 29 ♕c2 ♗d6 30 ♘f5 ♘xf5 31 gxf5 ♗b4 32 ♔g2 ♕d6 33 f3 ♖e7 34 ♖e2 ♖de8 35 ♖ce1 ♕f6 36 ♗g4 ♗d6 37 ♕d1 ♗b4 38 ♕c2 ♖d8 39 ♖d1 ♗c8 40 e4 ♗xc3 41 e5 ♖xe5 42 dxe5 ♗xe5 43 ♖de1 ♗c7 44 ♖e8+ ♔g7 45 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 46 ♖d1 ♗b7 47 f4 d4+ 48 ♗f3 d3 0-1

Game 39
Alterman-Pigusov
Beijing 1997

1 c4 e6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♗g5 ♗e7 5 e3 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 ♘f3 b6 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 c6 12 0-0 a5 13 bxa5 ♖xa5



Question 65. 13 bxa5 seems a bit odd somehow!

Answer 65. It is true that with b4xa5, White removes the brake from Black's ...c6-c5 break and also activates the black rook on a8 along the a-file. However, the move also has several benefits:

1. White gains another semi-open file to pressurise the black queenside - thus White can now target the b6-pawn with ♕d1-b3 and ♖a1-b1.

2. Once Black achieves the ...c6-c5 break, White's knight on c3 will have a safe and impregnable square on b5.

It is clear that this move is almost the antithesis of 13 b5.

14 a4

Preventing the b-pawn from advancing at all and thus fixing it as a target. 14 ♕b3 is considered in the next main game.

14...♗c8!

Question 66. Wow!

Answer 66. This is the modern method of playing these positions.

Question 67. It seems familiar somehow!

Answer 67. The concept is derived from a line of the Tartakower that we have seen earlier: 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 10 ♘xd5 exd5 when Black aims to develop his bishop not to the obvious b7-square, but to e6.

Question 68. So what's the point?

Answer 68. White can easily develop pressure against the b6-pawn by playing his queen to b3 and a rook to b1. Obviously, Black will deal with this pressure by developing his knight to d7. The key question is the bishop on b7. Just as in the 8 cxd5 line, the bishop is much less actively-placed on b7 than on e6 - on b7, it is blocked by the pawn on c6 and the pawn on d5. Even if Black achieves his ...c6-c5 break, all the bishop does on b7 is defend the pawn. From e6, the bishop defends the d5-pawn, while having access to squares along the c8-h3 diagonal. Consequently, before White forces ...♘b8-d7, Black transfers his bishop to e6!

Question 69. Isn't Black wasting a lot of time though?

Answer 69. In a way, yes, but because Black has taken care of the safety of his king already, there is no way for White really to exploit this.

Question 70. So what is White trying to do?

Answer 70. White's ultimate aim is to achieve the e3-e4 break and to blow open the centre. In this context, the bishop is excellently placed on e6: it covers the d5-square directly while protecting sensitive kingside light squares such as f7 and f5.

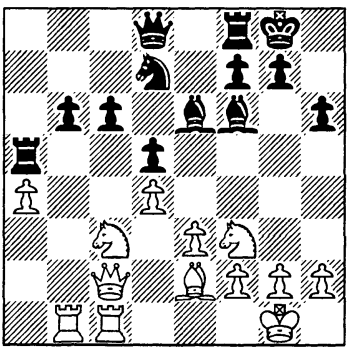
However, it must be said that Kramnik was successful with the older 14...c5 against Lautier at Belgrade 1997. After 15 ♕b3 ♘a6 16 ♖fb1 ♘b4 17 ♘a2 ♘xa2 18 ♖xa2 ♗a6 19 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 20 ♕b5 ♕a8 21 dxc5 bxc5 22 ♕xc5 ♖xa4 23 ♖xa4 ♕xa4 24 h3, the game was agreed drawn. I must say though, that I don't fully understand why 24 ♕xd5 was not possible. After 24...♖d1+ 25 ♘e1 I don't see a follow-up for Black.

15 ♖b1

15 ♕b3 ♗e6 16 ♖fd1 ♘d7 17 ♘e1 ♗e7! 18 ♘d3 ♗d6! (stopping ♘d3-f4) 19 ♘b4 ♕a8 20 ♖ab1 ♖c8 21 ♕b2 ♘f6 (Black has achieved his ideal set-up) 22 ♘ba2 h5! 23 ♘c1 h4! was nice for Black in Peter-Siegel, Budapest 1997.

15...♗e6 16 ♕c2 ♘d7 17 ♖fc1

Instead 17 ♗d3 ♖e8 18 ♖fe1 g6 19 ♘e2 c5 20 ♘f4 ♗g4 21 ♘xd5 ♗xf3 22 gxf3 cxd4 23 ♗b5 ♘e5 24 ♕e4 dxe3 25 fxe3 ♖e6 was very murky in Rychagov-Rustemov, Moscow Championship 1996, while Maksimenko-Beliavsky, Tivat 1995, saw 17 ♖fe1 ♕c7 18 ♗d3 ♖aa8! (I like this move - Black re-establishes the connection of his rooks, and makes his position safer in anticipation of the coming central break) 19 e4 dxe4 20 ♘xe4 (20 ♗xe4 ♖ac8 21 ♘e2 ♕d6 22 ♖bc1 ♗d5 is unclear according to Gagarin) 20...♗d5! (see how useful the bishop is on e6 rather than b7) 21 ♗c4 ♖fc8 22 ♗xd5 cxd5 23 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 24 ♕xc7 ♖xc7 25 ♖xb6 ♖xa4 26 ♖b2 with equality.



17...♕a8!

A typical way of activating the black queen.

18 ♗d3 c5 19 ♗h7+ ♔h8 20 ♗f5 ♕c6 21 h3 ♖c8 22 ♗xe6 fxe6 23 ♕g6 ♖aa8 24 ♕h5 ♕d6 25 ♘b5 ♕e7 26 ♖a1 e5 27 ♖e1 ♕e6 28 ♘h2 e4 29 ♖ed1 cxd4 30 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 31 ♖xd4 ♘f6 ½-½

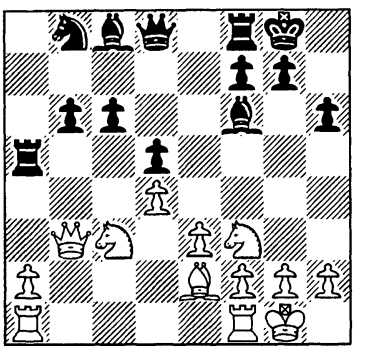
Question 71. That's all very well, but why

doesn't White just immediately go for the b-pawn with ♕d1-b3 and ♖a1-b1 or ♘c3-a4?

Answer 71. I'm glad you asked me that question!

Game 40
Hulak-Lutz
Wijk aan Zee 1995

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 c6 12 0-0 a5 13 bxa5 ♖xa5 14 ♕b3 ♗c8!



Still.

15 ♘a4!?

15 ♗d3 was met by 15...♗e6 in I.Sokolov-Lutz, Garmisch rapidplay 1994, when 16 a4 c5 17 ♗b5 ♘a6! 18 ♖ad1 c4!? 19 ♕b1 ♘c7 20 ♘e5 ♘xb5 21 axb5 ♗xe5 22 dxe5 ♕a8 23 f4 ♖a3 24 ♕c2 ♗f5 25 ♕xf5 ♖xc3 was very murky.

Question 72. So why not 15 ♖ab1?

Answer 72. As Lutz points out, 15...♗f5! gains a tempo on the rook on b1 to develop the bishop and after 16 ♖b2 ♘d7 Black has the development set-up he wants. The text seems to force ...♘b8-d7 but...

15...♗a6! 16 ♗xa6 ♘xa6!

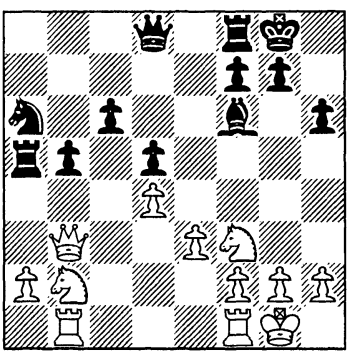
The exchange of light-squared bishops is always something that requires great care from Black as it greatly weakens the central and queenside light squares. For example, the c6-pawn will need another piece to defend it and if it advances, then d5 is chronically weak. However, in this case, due to misplaced knight on a4, Black gains some unexpected counterplay.

17 ♖ab1?!

17 ♘xb6 loses to 17...♖b5 of course. Siegel-Lutz, Germany 1994, saw 17 ♖ac1 but 17...c5! 18 dxc5? (18 ♘xb6? c4 leaves the knight on b6 very precariously placed according to Lutz, whereas 18 ♘c3 ♘b4 [eyeing d3] 19 ♖fd1 ♕a8 20 a4 ♖d8 is White's safest, but is absolutely fine for Black) 18...bxc5 19 ♘c3 c4! 20 ♕b1 ♘c5 21 ♘d4 ♗xd4 22 exd4 ♘d3 gave Black the advantage. The safe retreat 17 ♘c3 is best according to Lutz, when 17...b5!? 18 a3 ♕a8!? gives Black counterplay against the white a-pawn.

17...b5 18 ♘b2

18 ♘c3 was safer when Black plays 18...♕e7 19 a4 b4 20 ♘a2 ♖b8 intending ...♕e7-e6 and ...c6-c5 with counterplay.



18...c5! 19 dxc5 ♘xc5 20 ♕b4 ♘e4 21 ♘d4 ♗xd4 22 exd4? ♖xa2 23 ♖a1 ♖xa1 24 ♖xa1 ♕b6 25 f3 ♘g5 26 ♘d3 ♘xf3+! 0-1

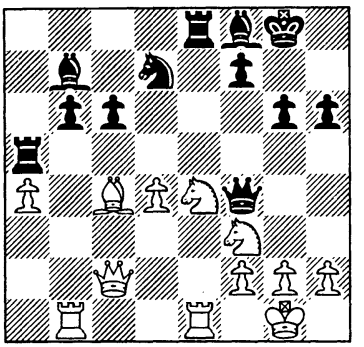
Game 41
Izeta-Asrian
Ubeda 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7

c6 12 0-0 ♕d6

A rather slow alternative to the normal 12...a5. White now develops a useful initiative.

13 ♕b3 ♘d7 14 ♖fe1 ♗e7 15 ♖ab1 a5 16 bxa5 ♖xa5 17 a4 ♖e8 18 ♗f1 ♗f8 19 ♕c2 g6 20 e4! dxe4 21 ♘xe4 ♕f4 22 ♗c4!



The f7-square is extremely sore in this line: you can see why Black players now tend to use the 12...a5 move order to retain the option of transferring the light-squared bishop to e6!

22...♗g7 23 ♖e2 24 d5 ♖aa8 25 ♖be1 ♖ad8 26 ♕b3 ♗a8 27 g3 ♕b8 28 d6 ♖f8 29 ♗xf7+! ♖xf7 30 ♘eg5 hxg5 31 ♘xg5 ♖df8 32 ♖e8!! ♕xd6 33 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 34 ♘e6 1-0

By any standards this was a really great game from Karpov.

Game 45

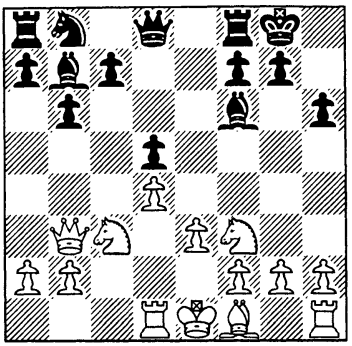
Dautov-Kir.Georgiev

Elista Olympiad 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♕b3!? ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♖d1

see following diagram

Question 74. This looks like rather an odd plan!



Answer 74. White is actually aiming for a sort of improved version of the 11 b4 and 13 a3 line above: the aims are certainly the same. By placing the queen on b3, White deters his opponent from playing ...c7-c5 as Black cannot recapture on c5 with the pawn as his bishop on b7 will be loose. Moreover, of course, the rook on d1 anticipates ...c7-c5 so that after d4xc5 White will have a large amount of pressure on d5. The queen on b3 is a key piece since by attacking the d5-pawn, it prevents Black from developing his knight to d7 immediately. Consequently, if Black wishes to develop his knight to d7, he must first play...c7-c6 to hold his d5-pawn. Then we get a similar black queenside pawn structure to the line above where White aimed to exploit the Black's pawn structure by playing for e3-e4. This is White's most consistent plan: to play ♗f1-d3, castle and then aim for e3-e4.

11...♖e8

11...c6 12 ♗d3 ♗c8!? was tried in Karpov-Beliavsky, Belgrade 1996. After 13 0-0 ♗g4 (13...♗e6!? seems possible and then maybe 14 ♘e5!?) 14 ♘e2!? ♕e7 15 ♗b1 ♖c8 (15...♘d7 16 ♕c2!) 16 h3 ♗xf3 17 gxf3, the position is not easy to assess, but Black's light-square queenside weaknesses are more annoying than White's kingside doubled pawns.

12 ♗d3

The quieter 12 ♗e2 avoids Black's next

freeing idea, but gives him a little more time to arrange himself. After 12...c6 13 0-0 ♘d7 14 ♖fe1 (14 ♗d3 ♘f8 15 e4 ♘e6 16 e5 ♗e7 17 ♗f5 ♗f8 was played in Barlov-Schlosser, Haninge 1988, and now Barlov gives 18 g3 followed by ♗h3-g2 as a slight edge for White. I really have my doubts as to how good these positions are for White. Black will play for ...c6-c5, perhaps after a preliminary advance of his queenside pawns with ...b6-b5, ...a7-a5 and ...b5-b4. White's dark-square pawn chain can be very vulnerable.) 14...♘f8 15 e4 ♘e6 16 exd5 cxd5 17 ♗f1 ♖e7 18 ♖e2 ♖c8, as in Malisauskas-Van der Sterren, Yerevan Olympiad 1996, Black was very comfortable.

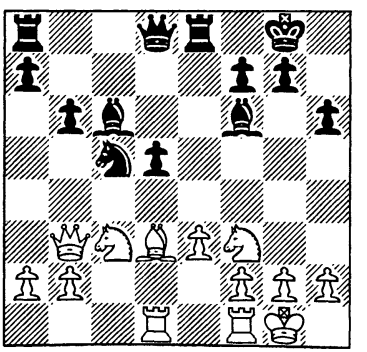
12...c5!?

Black's most dynamic approach, using tactics to achieve his goal. 12...c6 13 0-0 ♘d7 is also possible, though obviously White is a tempo up on Barlov-Schlosser.

13 dxc5 ♘d7! 14 c6

White settles for a positional gain rather than entering into the tactical complications of 14 cxb6 (14 ♘a4 d4! 15 ♗g6 ♗xf3! 16 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 17 gxf3 ♘e5! 18 ♗xe8 ♕xe8 is actually very dangerous for White due to the exposed knight on a4 and the threat of ...♘e5xf3+ and ...♕e8-h5) 14...d4 15 ♗b5 or 15 ♗g6!?

14...♗xc6 15 0-0 ♘c5



Question 75. How good is this position for White?

Answer 75. White has a very small advantage, but it is really very little. Black's IQP is compensated by his two bishops. Contrast this position with ones we saw in the game Gretarsson-Yusupov and you will see the value of White's pawn on b2 – his position seems so much more solid.

16 ♕a3

16 ♕c2 ♖c8! 17 ♗h7+ ♔h8 18 ♗f5 ♘e6! 19 ♘d4 (19 ♕b3 ♗xc3 20 bxc3 ♕f6 21 ♗g4 ♗b7 was fine for Black in Gulko-Radashkovich, USSR 1971) 19...♘xd4 20 exd4 ♖c7 21 ♕d3 g6 22 ♗g4 h5 23 ♗f3 ♖ce7 was very pleasant for Black in Beliavsky-Kramnik, Belgrade 1997.

16...a5

Question 76. Doesn't Black want to gain two bishops versus two knights with 16...♘xd3?

Answer 76. It is a possibility, but it makes the d5-pawn a little harder to defend. The knight on c5 is a nice active piece, taking away b3 from the white queen and d3 from a white rook and thus making it hard for White to co-ordinate his heavy pieces against the d-pawn. Moreover, it has good outposts both on c5 and on e4 later, so it doesn't seem worth it to exchange it for a bishop that is doing little in this position.

16...a5 secures the knight on c5 by preventing b2-b4.

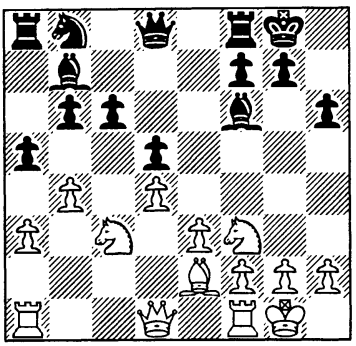
17 ♘e2 ♕d6 18 ♘ed4 ♗b7 19 ♖c1 g6 20 ♖fd1 ♖ac8 21 ♗b5 ♖ed8 22 g3

Dautov claims a slight advantage with 22 ♖c2 ♔g7 23 ♖dc1 ♕b8 24 b4 axb4 25 ♕xb4, but I don't feel that this is very frightening for Black.

22...♔g7 23 ♖c2 ♘e4!? 24 ♕xd6 ♘xd6 25 ♗c6 ♗xc6?!

25...♗a6! 26 ♖dc1 (26 ♗xd5 ♖xc2 27 ♘xc2 ♘e4! with the threat of ...♗a6-e2 looks horrible for White; 26 ♖cc1 ♘e4 is equal according to Dautov) 26...♗d3 27 ♖c3 ♗e4 28 ♘d2 ♘f5! 29 ♘2b3 ♘e7! 30 ♗b5 ♖xc3 31 ♖xc3 ♖c8 is equal according to Dautov. Now White is a touch better again.

5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 c6 12 0-0 a5 13 a3



Question 73. This looks very solid.

Answer 73. This is the most flexible of White's options. It makes the position very close to the Exchange QGD where Black has played the rather unusual and weakening ...b7-b6 (he always chooses to keep the b7-c6-d5 structure intact in the Exchange variation). White does not commit himself to one structure, but keeps open the possibility of all three. By maintaining the pawn on b4, White gains several benefits, particularly against the bishop on b7:

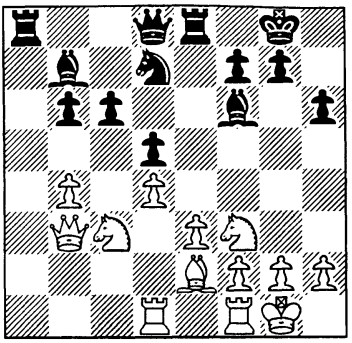
1. White keeps the ...c6-c5 central break under wraps and so keeps the bishop on b7 passive. This gives White a much better chance of achieving the e3-e4 break.

2. By maintaining the threat of the b4-b5 break, White makes sure that unlike in the 13 bxa5 system, Black cannot easily transfer his bishop to the c8-h3 diagonal as there is still always the possibility of b4-b5, attacking the pawn on c6 and softening up Black's light squares.

13...♘d7 14 ♕b3 ♖e8 15 ♖ad1

This is White's most ambitious move, preventing 15...♘f8 due to 16 b5! when 16...c5 loses a pawn to simply 17 dxc5. 15 ♗d3 is seen in the next main game and 15 b5 in Game 43.

15...axb4 16 axb4



16...b5!

A typical idea in normal Exchange variation lines. Here, Black rules out any b4-b5 ideas to soften up his central light squares and prepares an outpost for his d7-knight on c4 via the b6-square. The drawback of course is that the bishop on b7 is now extremely passive and will not be activated by ...c6-c5.

17 ♗d3!?

A suggested improvement of Speelman's over his game with Lputian, Kropotkin 1995, where 17 ♘e1?! ♘b6 18 ♘d3 ♗c8 19 ♘c5 ♗f5 20 ♖a1 ♗e7 21 ♖a2 ♖xa2 22 ♕xa2 ♗d6 was very pleasant for Black.

The text very logically, in view of Black's entombed bishop on b7, aims for the advance e3-e4.

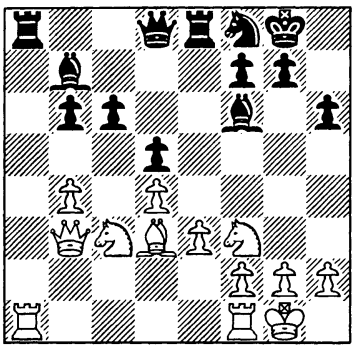
17...♘f8?!

A rather passive move. 17...♘b6! seems much more logical and after 18 e4 then 18...♘c4! 19 e5 ♖a3! followed by ...♗f6-e7 is rather unclear, while after 18 exd5 cxd5 19 ♘xb5 ♕b6! 20 ♘c3 ♖a3! Black regains the pawn with a good position.

18 e4! dxe4 19 ♘xe4 ♗c8 20 d5 cxd5 21 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 22 ♗xb5 ♖d8 23 ♘d4 ♗g4 24 ♖d2 ♖ab8 25 h3 ♗e6 26 ♗c6 ♘g6 27 b5 ♘f4 28 ♖fd1 ♗c8 29 ♕f3 ♖d6 30 ♔h2 ♕e5 31 ♕e3 f6 32 ♘f3 ♕xe3 33 fxe3 ♘e6 34 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 35 ♖xd5 ♗b7 36 ♘d4 ♘xd4 37 exd4 ♗xc6 38 bxc6 ♖c8 39 ♖d6 ♖c7 40 d5 ♔f7 41 ♖e6 ♖a7 42 ♖e3 1-0

Game 42
Arkell-Short
British Ch., Torquay 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 c6 12 0-0 a5 13 a3 ♘d7 14 ♕b3 ♖e8 15 ♗d3!? axb4 16 axb4 ♘f8!



Without the rook on d1, Black has no fear of b4-b5 and thus can transfer the knight immediately to e6, where it will eventually support the ...c6-c5 break while attacking d4 and thus deterring e3-e4.

17 ♖fd1 ♘e6 18 ♗f1 ♕d6 19 ♘e1 h5 20 g3?? ♖xa1 21 ♖xa1 ♗xd4!

Ouch! A typical and often fatal tactic.

22 exd4 ♘xd4 23 ♕a3 ♖xe1 24 ♖xe1 ♘f3+ 25 ♔h1 ♘xe1 26 ♕a7 ♕e7 0-1

Game 43
Karpov-Short
Amsterdam 1991

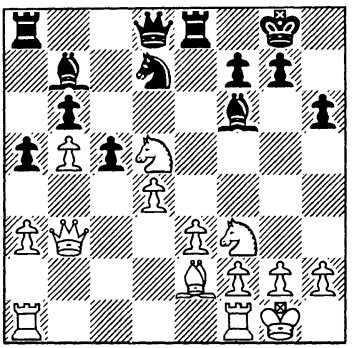
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 c6 12 0-0 ♖e8 13 ♕b3 a5 14 a3 ♘d7

Via the older move order, we have reached the same position as the previous two games.

15 b5!?

The text is obviously crucial, since after 15...c5 Black must be prepared to give up the pawn on d5.

15...c5 16 ♘xd5



16...♗xd4! 17 ♖ad1

17 exd4 ♖xe2 18 ♖fe1 (suggested as interesting by Short) was tested in Züger-Van der Sterren, Winterthur 1996, when 18...a4 19 ♕c4 ♖xe1+ 20 ♖xe1 ♔f8 21 ♘e7 ♗xf3 22 gxf3 cxd4 23 ♕xd4 ♘c5 was fine for Black.

17...♘e5! 18 ♘xe5

18 ♘f4 ♘xf3+ 19 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 20 gxf3 ♕d6 equalises according to Short.

18...♗xd5 19 ♘c4 ♕g5 20 g3 ♕f5! 21 ♖fe1 ♕e4! 22 f3 ♕xe3+! 23 ♕xe3 ♖xe3 24 ♘xe3 ♗xe3+ 25 ♔f1 ♗d4! 26 ♖xd4

Necessary. In Arkell-Parker, Hastings 1995, White got into trouble after 25 ♔g2 ♗d4 26 ♗d3 ♗b3 27 ♖c1 ♔f8 28 ♗c4 a4 29 ♖e2 ♖d8 30 f4 ♗f6 due to his weak queenside pawns.

26...cxd4 27 ♖d1 ♖c8 28 ♖xd4 ♖c5 29 f4 ♔f8 30 ♗d3 ♔e7 ½-½

Finally, for this line, a classic that shows what can go wrong if you get your development a little tangled up.

Game 44
Karpov-Kir.Georgiev
Tilburg 1994

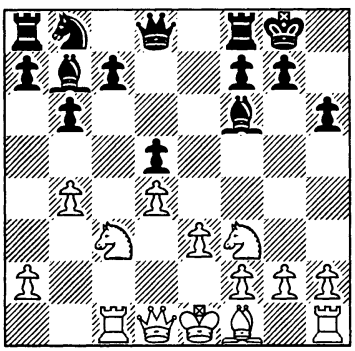
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4

26 ♘xc6 ♘f5 27 ♖dc1 ♖d6 28 g4 ♘e7 29 ♘xe7 ♖xc2 30 ♖xc2 ♗xe7 31 ♔f1 ♖f6 32 ♔e2 ♗c5 33 h3 ♔f8 34 ♖d2 ♖d6 35 ♘d4 ♗xd4 ½-½

Finally, we examine two systems that can tend to lead into one another: 8 ♖c1 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 and 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5.

Game 46
Akopian-Short
Linares 1995

1 ♘f3 d5 2 c4 e6 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 b6 8 ♖c1 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4



11...c5!?

Obviously, there is a lot to be said for playing this move if it is possible. However, 11...c6 is also not stupid, aiming to meet 12 ♕b3 with 12...a5! 13 bxa5 ♖xa5 14 ♗e2 ♗c8!, as in Korchnoi-Zviaginsev, Tilburg 1998. After 15 0-0 ♗e6 16 a4 ♘d7 17 ♕b1 ♗e7 Black had a very reasonable position, as in the 11 b4 lines above.

12 bxc5 bxc5 13 dxc5 ♘d7 14 ♘b5 ♖c8 15 ♗e2 ♘xc5

Akopian also suggest 15...♖xc5!?

16 0-0 a6 17 ♘bd4 g6?!

17...♕a5! 18 ♘b3 (18 ♖c2 ♘e4) 18...♘xb3 19 ♕xb3 ♗a8 was fairly level according to Akopian. Now Black has trouble dealing with the white queen.

18 ♕d2!

Aiming for b4.

18...♕e7 19 ♕a5 ♖fe8 20 ♖b1! ♔g7 21 ♖b6 ♖c7 22 h4! h5 23 ♘g5 ♗xd4 24 exd4 ♘e4 25 ♗f3 ♖ec8! 26 ♕b4 ♕xb4 27 ♖xb4 ♘d2 28 ♖d1 ♖c1 29 ♗e2 ♖xd1+ 30 ♗xd1 ♖c7 31 ♖b2 ♘e4 32 ♘xe4 dxe4 33 ♔h2 ♗d5 34 ♔g3 ♖c4 35 ♖d2 ♖c3+ 36 ♔f4 f6 37 ♖b2 ♖d3 38 ♗b3 ♗xb3 39 ♖xb3 ♖xd4 40 ♖a3 ½-½

Game 47
Pinter-Portisch
Austria 1997

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 b6 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♖c1

The 8 ♖c1 move order of the previous game and this move order can easily transpose into one another. I suppose that if White wants to force this fixed-centre position then he should play it via the 8 ♖c1 move order as 8 ♗d3 gives Black the extra idea of 8...dxc4!?

11...c5 12 0-0 cxd4

12...♖e8, waiting a little more flexibly, was tried in Morovic Fernandez-Short, Parnu 1998, when after 13 ♗b5 ♖e6 14 b3 a6 15 ♗d3 cxd4!? 16 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 17 exd4 ♘c6 18 ♕g4 ♕d6 19 ♗f5 ♖f6 20 ♘e2 g6 21 ♗b1 ♖e8 22 ♘g3 ♗c8 23 ♕d1 h5! Black's activity compensated for his slightly worse bishop.

13 exd4

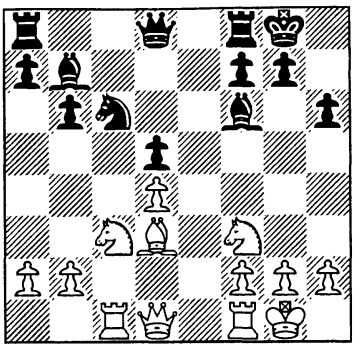
The most popular choice, though 13 ♘xd4 is also not without venom:

a) Yermolinsky-Short, Parnu 1998, continued 13...♘c6 14 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 15 ♘e2 ♕d6 16 ♕d2 ♖ad8 with a small edge for White.

b) 13...♘d7 seems very reasonable as it transposes to a very similar type of position to the 8 ♕b3 lines, e.g. 14 ♘f5 (14 ♘ce2 ♘c5 15 ♕c2 ♘xd3 [15...a5!?] 16 ♕xd3 ♕d7 17 ♖c2 ♖fc8 18 ♖d2 g6 was fine for Black in Yermolinsky-Vaganian, Groningen PCA

1993) 14...♘c5 15 ♗b1, as in Zviaginsev-Van der Sterren, Wijk aan Zee 1995, and now maybe 15...a5 to hold the knight on c5 and protect it from b2-b4.

13...♘c6



Question 77. Is this really good for White?

Answer 77. This is one of those slightly mysterious positions and structures that looks rather innocuous and yet scores incredibly well for White in practice. A look at the statistics shows that White is winning seven or eight games to Black's one.

Question 78. But White now has an IQP, while Black has the two bishops!

Answer 78. White can make life awkward for Black due to three factors related to the Tartakower system: the presence of the light-squared bishop on b7, the presence of the pawn on h6 rather than h7, and the absence of the knight from f6.

Question 79. Sounds like a case for Sherlock Holmes!

Answer 79. Hmm. Let's take the first two. The light-squared bishop is not on the c8-h3 diagonal any more. This means that the light squares around the black king are not covered by this bishop. Thus f5 is available to a white piece, while f7 is less protected than if the bishop were on e6. Thus consider the situation after White plays a plan with ♗b1 and ♕d3 threatening mate on h7. The natural, indeed only, defence is ...g7-g6. If the h-pawn were still on h7 then the softening move h2-h4-h5 would have no effect, but here, with the h-pawn already committed to h6, it will force a reaction from Black. Perhaps ...h6-h5 when the g5-square becomes available for the white knight, from where it can attack the f7-square.

14 ♗b1 ♖e8 15 ♕d3

15 ♕d2!? worked well in Zviaginsev-Van der Sterren, Reykjavik 1994, after 15...♗a6 (15...♕d6) 16 ♗d3 ♗b7 17 ♕f4 with a slight edge for White.

15...g6 16 ♖fe1 ♕d6 17 ♖e3!?

17 a3 was the previous attempt with the idea of following up with ♗b1-a2 attacking the d5-pawn. However, the slight weakening of the queenside light squares gives Black an opportunity to activate his knight with 17...♖ac8! 18 ♗a2 ♘a5 19 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 20 b4 ♘c4! 21 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 22 ♗xc4 ♕f4 23 ♖d1 ♗xf3 24 ♕xf3 ♖e4! 25 ♕xf4 ♖xf4 ½-½ Ftacnik-Van der Sterren, Sydney 1991.

17...♖xe3 18 fxe3!?

Pinter also gives 18 ♕xe3 as a slight advantage for White.

18...♗g7 19 a3 ♖c8 20 ♗a2 ♘e7 21 ♖e1 g5?

Really risky. 21...♘f5 22 ♕b5 a6 23 ♕b3 ♖e8 24 ♘a4 ♖e6 25 ♗b1 ♘e7 26 ♘c3 is given by Pinter as a slight edge, but it isn't so much.

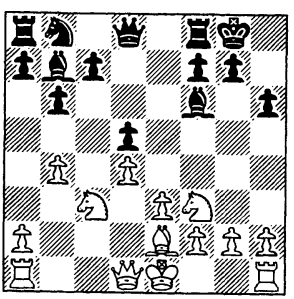
22 ♖f1 ♖d8 23 ♔h1 ♕g6 24 ♕e2 ♕h5 25 ♗b1 ♖e8 26 ♗d3 ♘c8 27 ♕f2 ♘d6 28 ♘d2 ♕h4?? 29 g3! ♕h5 30 ♘b5! ♗f8

30...♘xb5 31 g4! is the nice point!

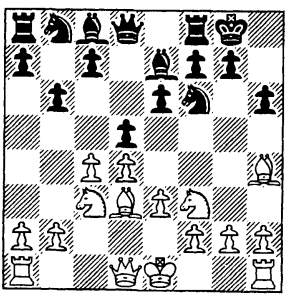
31 ♘xd6 ♗xd6 32 g4 ♕xh2+ 33 ♕xh2 ♗xh2 34 ♔xh2 ♖xe3 35 ♖f3 ♖e1 36 ♘f1 ♖d1 37 ♘g3 ♗c8 38 ♔h3 ♗d7 39 ♗f5 ♗e6 40 ♖d3 ♖e1 41 ♖d2 ♖e3 42 ♖e2 ♖b3 43 ♗xe6 fxe6 44 ♖xe6 ♖xb2 45 ♖e7 a5 46 ♘f5 ♔f8 47 ♖b7 ♔e8 48 ♘xh6 ♔d8 49 ♘f7+ ♔c8 50 ♘d6+ ♔d8 51 a4 ♖b4 52 ♘b5 ♖xa4 53 ♖xb6 ♖b4 54 ♖d6+ ♔e7 55 ♖xd5 ♔f6 56 ♘c7 a4 57 ♖f5+ ♔g6 58 ♖f6+ ♔h7 59 d5 ♖b3+ 60 ♔g2 ♖b4 61 ♔f3 ♖b3+ 62 ♔e4 ♖b4+ 63 ♔e5 1-0

Summary
In the main line, I really do prefer Kramnik's 11...c6 to Kasparov's 11...c5 – I think you need to be a bit too strong to play Kasparov's line successfully. For White, Pinter's choice against Portisch seems like an interesting and not theoretically heavy way to play.

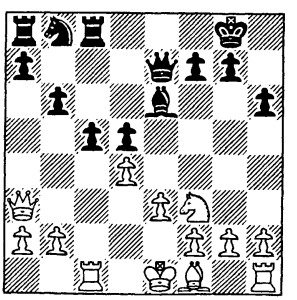
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6
8 cxd5
8 ♖c1 ♗b7
9 cxd5 – *Game 33;* 9 ♗e2 – Chapter 6, *Game 56*; 9 ♗xf6 – *Game 46*
8 ♗e2
8...♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 *(D)*
11...c5 12 bxc5 bxc5 13 ♖b1
13...♕a5 – *Game 34*
13...♗c6 14 0-0 ♘d7 15 ♗b5 ♕c7 16 ♕d3 ♖fc8
17 h3 – *Game 35*; 17 ♖fc1 – *Game 36*; 17 ♖fd1 – *Game 37*
11...c6 12 0-0
12...a5
13 b5 – *Game 38*
13 bxa5 ♖xa5
14 a4 – *Game 39*; 14 ♕b3 – *Game 40*
13 a3 ♘d7 14 ♕b3 ♖e8
15 ♖ad1 – *Game 41*; 15 ♗d3 – *Game 42*; 15 b5 – *Game 43*
12...♕d6 – *Game 44*
8...dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗b7 – Chapter 6, *Games 48-50*
8...♘bd7 – Chapter 6, *Game 57*
8 ♕b3 – *Game 45*
8 ♗d3 *(D)*
8...♗b7
9 ♗xf6 – *Game 47*
9 0-0 – Chapter 6, *Game 56*
8...dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗b7 – Chapter 6, *Games 48-50*
8...♘xd5 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 10 ♘xd5 exd5 11 ♖c1 ♗e6 12 ♕a4 c5 13 ♕a3 ♖c8 *(D)* **14 ♗b5**
14 ♗e2 – *Game 32*
14...a6 – *Game 31*



11 b4

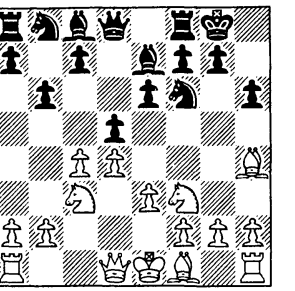


8 ♗d3



13...♖c8

CHAPTER SIX

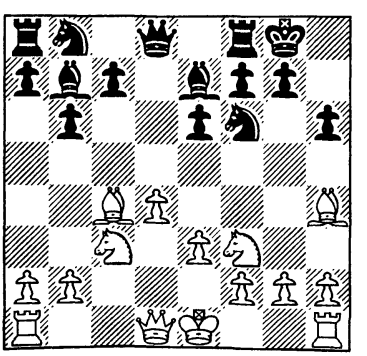


Tartakower Variation: Development Plans

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6

In this chapter we shall consider systems in which White takes a long-term view of his opponent's set-up. White simply develops his pieces on good squares, trusting that in the ensuing struggle, his pieces will be better placed than Black's. Obviously, since White does not fix the structure, both sides enjoy a great deal of flexibility.

We shall first examine systems with a very early ...d5xc4 (Games 48-50), before considering various lines in which Black avoids an early exchange in the centre (Games 51-57). The most important point about the ...d5xc4 move order, is that by playing an immediate 8...dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗b7



Black can avoid the fixed-structure variations that arise after 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 or 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5. Note that Black waits until his opponent has moved his light-squared bishop before taking on c4 so that White's bishop reaches c4 in two moves.

Question 1. Is there a downside to capturing so early on c4?

Answer 1. If you look at the statistics – not really! Digressing slightly, this is one of the most confusing things about the QGD – both for players seeking to take it up, and for me preparing this book! In every conceivable line, you find that reasonably strong players have agreed short draws with each other. This can make it hard to gauge exactly what is a good line and what is not! So sound is Black's development in general, that an inaccurate move order only has subtle consequences that are not immediately visible to the casual glance.

For example, the drawbacks to an early ...d5xc4 are neither tactical nor violent, they merely involve questions of choice. By committing himself to an early ...d5xc4, Black significantly reduces the choice of pawn structures available to him. For example, after a subsequent ...c7-c5, we can now only reach a symmetrical-type structure after

d4xc5 or ...c5xd4, ♘f3xd4, or an IQP position after ...c5xd4, e3xd4. White consequently has a much stronger idea of what his opponent is playing for, which means that he can determine the best squares for his pieces, particularly his rooks, at an earlier stage.

Question 2. I'm a bit disappointed! I was hoping for some clear, concrete reason!

Answer 2. I'm sorry – that's it I'm afraid!

Game 48
Yurtaev-Beliavsky
Yerevan Olympiad 1996

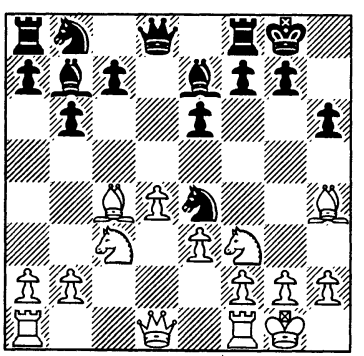
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗e2

8 ♗d3 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗b7 is exactly the same thing.

8...dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗b7 10 0-0

Now Black has a choice between the active 10...♘e4!? and the quieter 10...♘bd7 (Game 50).

10...♘e4!?



Question 3. What exactly is the point of this move?

Answer 3. This manoeuvre is very familiar to us from the Lasker variation. Black's major inconvenience, as always in the QGD, is finding ways to activate his major pieces. Black's main central break is ...c7-c5, but once the d-file is opened, both sides have to find a spot for their queen. White's slight space advantage means that he has the e2-square at his disposal, but Black has no such post. Consequently, by exchanging off the dark-squared bishops, Black aims to liberate e7 for the queen in order to avoid problems once he breaks in the centre with ...c7-c5.

The immediate 10...c5? is a mistake: 11 dxc5 ♕xd1 12 ♖fxd1 ♗xc5 13 ♘e5! ♖c8 14 ♗e2 ♘c6 15 ♗xf6 gxf6 16 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 17 ♖d7+ ♗e7 18 ♖xb7 was very good for White in M.Gurevich-Kamsky, Linares 1991.

11 ♗xe7

This falls in with Black's plan of finding a square for his queen. White's alternatives here are considered in the next main game.

11...♕xe7 12 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 13 ♖c1 ♖d8 14 ♗d3

By exchanging the light-squared bishops, White hopes to weaken his opponent's queenside light squares and thus to gain some profit from them. As Beliavsky points out, the immediate 14 ♘e5 is countered by the clever 14...♘d7 15 ♗d3 ♗xd3! 16 ♘c6 ♕e8 17 ♕xd3 ♘c5! equalising.

14...♗xd3 15 ♕xd3 c5 16 ♘e5

16 ♕a3 ♘d7 17 ♖fd1 ♔f8 is nothing for White according to Beliavsky.

16...♕b7

Intending ...♘b8-d7 with an end to Black's problems.

17 b4!? cxd4

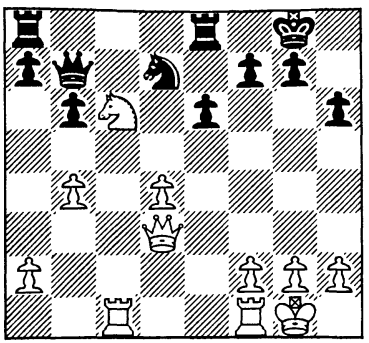
17...cxb4 18 f4, intending f4-f5, gives White reasonable attacking chances according to Beliavsky.

18 exd4 ♘d7 19 ♘c6 ♖e8

see following diagram

White's knight on c6 provides compensation for his isolated queen's pawn, but no more than that. In trying to prove an advantage, White opens lines that only his opponent's pieces can use.

20 f4 ♘f6 21 f5 ♖xe6 23 b5 ♖ae8 24 ♕f5 ♕d6 25 ♖cd1 ♖e2 26 a4 a6 27 d5 axb5 28 axb5 ♖b2 29 ♖de1 ♖xe1 30 ♖xe1 g6 31 ♕f3 ♔g7 32 ♘e7 ♕c5+ 0-1



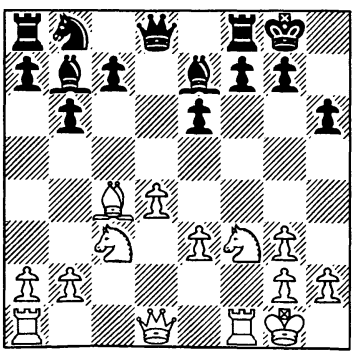
Question 4. Wow, this looks very easy for Black!

Answer 4. It seems that in order to fight for a real advantage, White must not give his opponent a square for his queen so easily. Thus, at some stage, he must play ♗h4-g3.

Game 49
Vyzmanavin-Zarubin
Russian Team Ch. 1995

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 d5 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗d3 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗b7 10 0-0 ♘e4 11 ♘xe4

11 ♗g3!? ♘xg3 12 hxg3 leads to a type of position that we will encounter later (Game 53). The alternative recapture 12 fxg3!?



was tried in Ojanen-Richter, Trencianske Teplice 1949, when 12...♘c6 13 a3 ♘a5 14 ♗a2 c5 15 ♕d3 ♘c6 16 ♖ad1 ♕e8 17 d5 ♖d8 18 ♕c2 exd5 19 ♘xd5 ♖d6 20 ♕f5 ♗c8 21 ♕f4 ♖d7 22 e4 ♗d8 23 e5 turned out in White's favour.

Question 5. Isn't it a rather disgusting positional idea to take on g3 away from the centre like this?

Answer 5. It is, but it is an idea worth remembering. As always in the Tartakower, the problem can always tend to be the weakness of Black's kingside light squares.

Question 6. Why?

Answer 6. This is due to several factors:

1. Black always uses his king's knight to extract certain concessions from his opponent, but by moving it from the kingside, he denudes the h7-square of protection, for example, while allowing access to h5 and g4 to the white queen.

2. The move ...h7-h6, while giving Black some room on the kingside, does weaken the kingside light squares and the g6-square in particular. Consequently, for example, a knight that comes into e5 cannot be driven away by ...f7-f6 as the knight can then simply hop into g6.

3. Finally, the presence of the light-squared bishop on the a8-h1 long diagonal rather than the c8-h3 diagonal means that the kingside light squares again rather lack the protection of the pieces.

Consequently, we see here that the opening of the f-file has a certain basis – the rook eyes f7 and can combine with a knight on e5 and the bishop on c4 against the f7-e6 pawn chain. Of course, it must also be said that Black should not take his knight to the queenside. The knight should go to d7, aiming later for f6 if necessary.

11...♗xe4

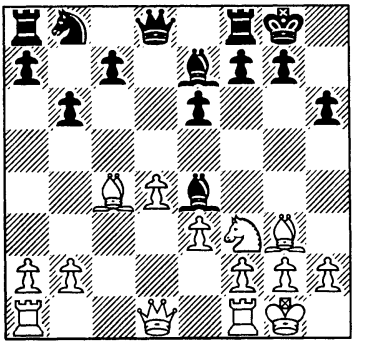
11...♗xh4!? is worth considering.

12 ♗g3!?

see following diagram

12...♗d6

Black has two other logical attempts in this position:



a) 12...c5 was met by the powerful 13 dxc5! ♗xc5 14 ♘e5! in Groszpeter-Lein, Saint John 1988. This is a typical idea for White - to make use of Black's slight development lag by heading for an endgame where White has the open d-file and Black still has to develop his queenside. See also M.Gurevich-Kamsky in the note to Black's tenth move in the previous game. Here, after 14...♕xd1 (14...♘c6 15 ♘d7!) 15 ♖fxd1 ♗e7 16 ♖ac1 ♗f6 17 ♗e2 ♗d5 18 b3 a5 19 f3 ♗g5 20 ♔f2 a4 21 h4 ♗d8 22 e4 White was in complete control.

b) 12...♘d7 must be Black's best try, but after 13 ♖c1 c5 14 d5!? White still stands a little better.

13 ♖c1 ♗xg3 14 hxg3

Question 7. It's strange, but White almost always seems to welcome the doubling of his g-pawns!

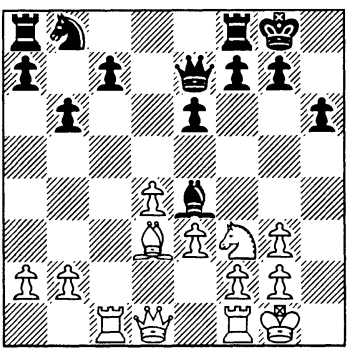
Answer 7. That's true. The key point is that it takes control of the dark squares around White's kingside when White plays e3-e4. With the doubled pawn on g3, White does not cede control to a black queen or knight of the f4-square, which is a very common source of counterplay for Black. It also gives White the additional possibility of a g3-g4-g5 thrust against the exposed pawn on h6.

14...♕e7

14...♘d7 15 ♗b5! (intending ♗b5-c6) is awkward for Black as he cannot play the freeing 15...c5 due to 16 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 17 dxc5 winning a pawn.

15 ♗d3!

By making Black ...♗e7-d6xg3, and thus forcing him to exchange the dark-squared bishops without developing his queen to the key e7-square, White has managed to steal a tempo (no ...♖f8-d8 for Black) on the previous main game. This is rather crucial as it makes Black's development, let alone his chances of achieving the freeing ...c7-c5 break, extremely difficult.



15...♗b7 16 ♘e5 ♖c8 17 ♗b1 g6 18 ♕g4 ♘d7 19 ♘c6 ♕e8 20 ♕f4 ♔g7 21 e4 ♗xc6 22 ♖xc6 e5 23 dxe5 ♘xe5 24 ♕f6+ ♔g8 25 ♖cc1 c5 26 ♖cd1 ♖d8 27 ♗c2 ♖xd1 28 ♖xd1 h5 29 ♖d5 ♘g4 30 ♕c3 ♖d8 31 ♖xd8 ♕xd8 32 f3 ♘f6 33 ♗b3 ♕e7 34 ♕d2 ♘d7 35 f4 ♔g7 36 e5 ♔f8 37 ♗a4 ♘b8 38 e6 ♔g7 39 exf7 ♕xf7 40 ♕d6 ♘a6 41 ♗b3 ♕e8 42 ♔h2 c4 43 ♗xc4 ♘c5 44 ♕d4+ ♔h6 45 b4 ♘b7 46 ♗d3 ♘d8 47 ♕f6 ♘e6 48 ♗c4 ♘g7 49 ♗f7 ♕e4 50 ♕d8 1-0

Black can also try the ...♘f6-e4 idea a move or two later.

Game 50
Miralles-Spassky
Angers 1990

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 b6 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 ♘bd7

I have tweaked the move order a little here (it was actually 9...♘bd7 10 ♕e2 dxc4 11 ♗xc4) just to stay with our theme.

11 ♕e2

11 ♖c1 is interesting here, as 11...♘e4 12 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 13 ♗g3 transposes to the note to the 12th move in the above previous main game, while 12...♗xh4 13 d5!? for example is quite promising for White.

11 ♗g3 is also not stupid as obviously 11...♘e4 12 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 13 ♖c1 is nice for White, whereas 11...a6 (11...c5 12 d5! shows up a bad side of taking on c4 too early) 12 a4 ♗d6 and now not 13 ♕e2 as in Yermolinsky-Vaganian, New York open 1997, but 13 ♘e5! seems to give White a nice edge.

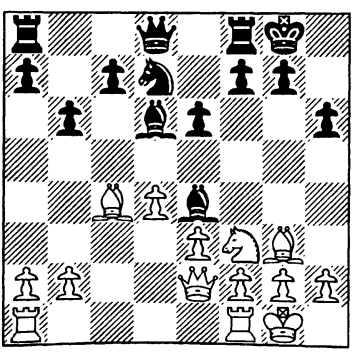
11...♘e4 12 ♗g3

12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 ♖ac1 ♘xc3 14 ♖xc3 c5 15 ♗b5 e5! 16 ♖d1 (16 ♗xd7 exd4! as the e-pawn is pinned to the queen on e2) ½-½ was Tal-Spassky, Reykjavik 1989, while 12 ♘xe4 ♗xh4!? (12...♗xe4 13 ♗g3 ♗d6 is possible as ♕d1-e2 is a less useful move than ♖a1-c1 in this line) is interesting.

12...♗d6!?

Dokhoian-Unzicker, German Bundesliga 1992, saw an unusual idea: 12...♘xc3 13 bxc3 ♘f6 14 ♖ac1 c5 15 ♖fd1 cxd4 16 cxd4 ♖c8 with a decent position for Black. Instead 12...♘xg3 13 hxg3 leads to the type of positions we consider in Game 53.

13 ♘xe4 ♗xe4



14 ♗a6

14 ♘e5!? is worth a try.

14...♗xg3 15 hxg3 c5 16 ♖fd1 ♕e7 17 ♖ac1 cxd4 18 exd4 ♘f6 19 ♘e5 ♖ad8 20 ♕e3 ♗b7 21 ♗b5 ♖c8 22 ♗c6 ♗xc6 23 ♘xc6 ♕b7 24 ♕f3 ♖c7 25 b4 a6 26 a4 b5 27 axb5 ♕xb5 28 ♖c5 ♕b6 29 ♖dc1 ♖b7 ½-½

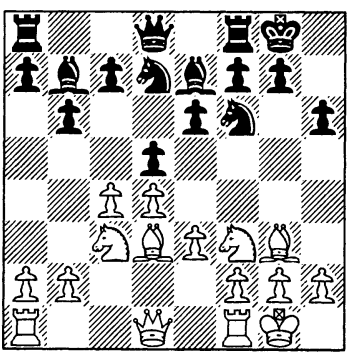
These lines show the independent side to ...d5xc4. Overall, this move is just a little too committal. We shall now examine White's possibilities after 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 ♘bd7.

Game 51
Yermolinsky-Beliavsky
Groningen 1993

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 ♘bd7

White now has a choice between the game continuation, 10 ♕e2 (see Games 52-55) and 10 ♖c1 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 (Game 56).

10 ♗g3!?



Question 8. This looks a bit odd!

Answer 8. This interesting idea has a specific sequence in mind. The first idea is that White removes his bishop from the h4-d8 diagonal so that ...♘f6-e4 will no longer gain a tempo against the bishop by uncovering the attack of the dark-squared bishop on e7. This fact gives White the extra positional threat of 11 cxd5 as after

11...♘xd5 (11...exd5 gives White a position of the type Yusupov-Kamsky which we saw in the introduction to Chapter 5. For example, Novikov-M.Gurevich, Lvov 1987, continued 12 ♖c1 a6 13 ♗b1 ♖e8 14 ♘e5 when 14...♘xe5 15 ♗xe5 gives White a slight advantage according to Chernin.) Black no longer gains a tempo on the dark-squared bishop, so White can then reply 12 e4 with a nice advantage. Note that from g3, the bishop covers the f4-square so that the knight cannot advance there.

Question 9. But although the bishop avoids the dark-squared bishop on e7, Black can still easily try to exchange it with his knight!

Answer 9. This is a very important point. White knows that his dark-squared bishop will be exchanged somehow – it has nowhere to hide! However, the point is that White can decide which piece to exchange it for. The natural assumption is that White must exchange it for Black's bishop on e7, but as we have seen, this completely frees Black's position by giving space to his major pieces and the queen in particular. Paradoxically, White would much rather exchange his bishop for Black's king's knight!

Question 10. But Black just gains the bishop pair!

Answer 10. Yes, but as compensation, White gains several factors:

1. Black wastes a significant amount of time (...♘f6-e4/h5xg3) acquiring the two bishops and so White gains some extra time for his own development in comparison to Black.

2. By exchanging his king's knight, Black weakens his defence of two important areas:

2a. The kingside light squares – Black's defence of h7 is weakened, while White's pieces gain access to g4 and h5.

2b. The d5-square. By swapping off his knight on f6, Black weakens his defence of his centre. Thus, if Black seeks to maintain a pawn on d5, this exchange will make it much harder for him; if Black swaps off all the central pawns, then in an IQP structure, he will find it harder to stop the d4-d5 breakthrough without making further concessions.

3. By avoiding the exchange of the bishop on e7, White leaves his opponent with the same dilemma relating to the development of his queen. Black is not out of the woods yet and must still work hard to achieve harmony in his position.

Question 11. Okay, but all the same, it seems to have been a pretty inglorious career for the dark-squared bishop – chased around and then exchanged for a knight, while creating doubled pawns in White's position!

Answer 11. True. I know what you mean! However, as we have discussed earlier, the doubled pawns are not a problem for White. In fact, they help him keep control of the dark squares on the kingside that can be a source of employment for the black pieces (particularly f4) when White accepts an IQP (after ...c5xd4, e3xd4) or when White tries to push with e3-e4. Moreover, the dark-squared bishop has performed one very important function.

Question 12. What?

Answer 12. It has teased ...h7-h6 out of Black's kingside.

Question 13. Wow! But isn't ...h7-h6 just a useful move, avoiding a tempo on the h7-pawn when White plays ♗f1-d3 and ♕d1-c2?

Answer 13. From this point of view, yes, but the drawback to ...h7-h6 is that it weakens the kingside light squares by loosening Black's control of g6, and as we shall see, this is of importance in a number of different structures.

10...c5

As we shall see, the main line for White at the moment is Kramnik's favourite 10 ♕e2 c5 11 ♗g3, and if White wants he can transpose to this line with 11 ♕e2 here.

Question 14. What is the point of playing ♕d1-e2? It doesn't seem anything special.

Answer 14. Remember that Black's position is very solid and sound. At this early stage, White cannot do anything extraordinary: there is no revolutionary manoeuvre leading to a huge attack! What White has to do is to find good squares for his pieces so that in the middlegame, his pieces will be in the right area to cause the opponent problems. The e2-square is generally a good one for the queen. Anyone used to a thoroughly modern opening like the Semi-Slav (like me, for instance) can really start champing at the bit at this stage – in that opening, already you're looking for the little guy on e8. The QGD requires a completely different mindset and a great deal more patience – it's like heading back to a pre-computer age: somehow your pieces seem to move to a slower tempo. In this opening good general moves are required to prepare yourself for the middlegame – you cannot win by opening preparation alone.

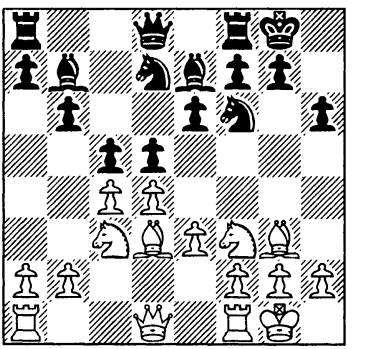
Question 15. Okay, but what does 11 ♕e2 do?

Answer 15. First of all, by moving the queen to e2, White connects his rooks and frees the central files on which they can join the action. This highlights one of the differences in the respective positions as Black is not yet ready to do the same. Secondly, White links up with his bishop on d3 along the f1-a6 diagonal. What will he do there, it is difficult to say yet – weaken d5 by a future ♗d3-a6 swapping off the light-squared bishop on b7 which helps to defend the d-pawn, for example? Maybe.

Question 16. You sound a bit vague!

Answer 16. This is something which will only happen if a certain set of circumstances arise, but the fact that such a possibility exists is a reason why ♕d1-e2 is better than ♕d1-d2 for example. You can't know yet what you will use, so try to play moves that set up as many things as possible.

Finally, the queen on e2 supports a later central thrust with e3-e4. It is a nice multipurpose move. The reason I like 10 ♗g3 first as a move order in this line is that here the natural 10...♘e4 actually loses a pawn to 11 ♗xe4! dxe4 12 ♘d2 f5 13 ♘b5! when 13...c5 14 ♘c7! forking e6 and a8 is fatal. So, in Zaichik-Petrosian, Moscow 1987, Black had to play 13...e5 (13...♖c8 14 ♘xa7!) 14 dxe5 ♘c5 15 ♘b3 ♘d3 16 ♘c1! a6 17 ♘d4 f4 18 ♘e6! fxg3 19 ♕g4 with a winning position for White. Obviously, 10...dxc4 transposes to lines studied above (Game 50).



11 cxd5!? ♘xd5

11...exd5?! 12 ♘e5 is obviously nice for White. Black, as always, really wants to keep his bishop on b7 active by leaving the a8-h1 diagonal open.

12 ♖c1

Here 12 e4 ♘b4! 13 ♗e2 cxd4 is fine for Black, as is 12 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 13 e4 ♗b7 according to Beliavsky.

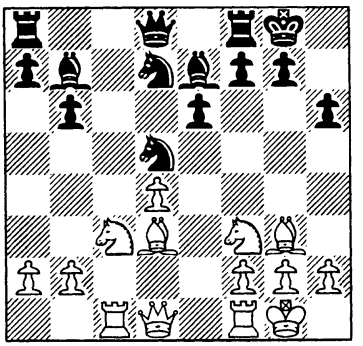
12...cxd4

12...♘xc3 was tried in Yermolinsky-Shapiro, World Open 1998, but after 13 bxc3 ♘f6 14 ♕e2 ♘e4 15 ♗f4 ♕c8 16 ♘e5 ♘f6 17 e4 ♖d8 18 ♖fd1 White had a very pleasant initiative.

13 exd4?!

This game is a cautionary tale: don't go into this type of IQP position, thinking that 'well, in an IQP position, there are always attacking chances.' Black is superbly organised here and White is not, and if Black is careful, his opponent should not get a sniff

of an attack.



Question 17. Why? What is so great about Black's position?

Answer 17. This is a very important positional lesson that can also be used in many other systems, most notably the Karpov system of the 4 e3 Nimzo (1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e3 0-0 5 ♗d3 c5 6 ♘f3 d5 7 0-0 dxc4 8 ♗xc4 cxd4 9 exd4 b6) with which a large proportion of the positions in this line bear a very close resemblance.

Question 18. What are the benefits of an IQP?

Answer 18. Well, you get loads of attacking chances...

Question 19. But why?

Answer 19. There are several reasons:

1. First of all, the side with the IQP always has a choice of posts for his pieces – everywhere there are squares for your pieces. For example, the queen can head just for e2, or maybe even for b3 or a4. Moreover, there is an open c-file for White's queen's rook and a semi-open e-file for White's king's rook. Thus we can say that the IQP offers a great deal of potential for activity.

2. The second, and most important, attribute of an IQP is that it offers two outposts for a white knight – c5, and the most natural and desirable e5.

Question 20. Why is this so good?

Answer 20. From e5 a knight surveys the world! In particular, it attacks the always sensitive f7-square, while not only freeing the d1-h5 diagonal for White's queen to get involved in the kingside action but also the third rank on which a white rook can be swung over to the kingside to join in the fun! Thus, for example, using an example from the QGA, after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 a4 ♘c6 8 ♕e2 cxd4 9 ♖d1 ♗e7 10 exd4 0-0 11 ♘c3 ♘b4 12 ♘e5 ♘fd5 13 ♘e4 b6 14 ♖a3!? White gets to launch an extremely dangerous offensive.

Question 21. Why did Black have to let the white knight into e5 by playing 11...♘b4? Couldn't he just have waited and then exchanged off the knight when it came there, say by playing 11...b6?

Answer 21. This is a very important point. Black played 11...♘b4 in order to take control of the d5-square. For example, after 11...b6, Black has to reckon with 12 d5! breaking through in the centre. Moreover, after 11...b6 12 ♘e5 ♘xe5 13 dxe5, Black would wish to put the knight on d5, but since White has three pieces attacking d5 – the bishop on c4, the knight on c3 and the rook on d1 – and Black has only two – the queen on d8 and the pawn on e6 – this is not possible.

Question 22. So what is the 'moral' to this story?

Answer 22. The moral is that in the QGA position, White's IQP is an active force, threatening to move forwards and break into the black position. Due to this threat, Black has to take action to blockade it, which then allows White to use the attacking e5-outpost for his knight. This is a good example of what the IQP is all about – it should contain some dynamic force of its own, tying down a small portion of Black's energy so that other small concessions appear. Another example would be the most typical IQP trap of all that can arise from so many openings: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 cxd4 7 exd4 ♘c6 8 ♘c3 ♗e7 9 a3 0-0 10

♗d3 b6 11 ♖e1 ♗b7 12 ♗c2 ♖e8 13 ♕d3 ♖c8?? (13...g6 is absolutely necessary) and now 14 d5! exd5 15 ♗g5 with a winning attack.

Question 23. But in this position...

Answer 23. Black already has a super-firm grip on the d5-square – the knight on d5 is blockading, supported by Black's bishop on b7. This means that Black has no concessions to make to hold back his opponent's activity: his development was made for this position.

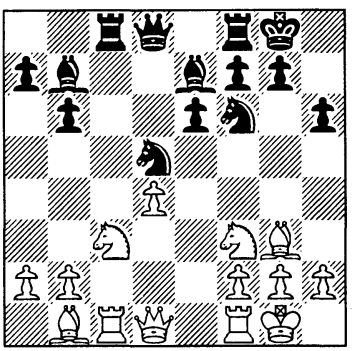
Question 24. So what has this got to do with the e5-outpost?

Answer 24. Well, you saw how in the QGA line White got the e5-outpost because his opponent had to divert pieces to hold back the IQP. Here, Black has no need of this; he also has a knight on d7 so that if White immediately tries to put his knight to e5, then Black can simply exchange it – end of problem! This means that Black has more flexibility – he only allows a knight to e5 when he wants, which in itself interferes with White's attacking ardour!

Question 25. But what can White do apart from 13 exd4? – 13 ♘xd4 looks just equal.

Answer 25. White does have one more interesting idea which was seen in Atalik-Beliavsky, Yugoslavia 1998: 13 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 14 e4!? ♗b7 (14...♗xa2 loses of course to 15 ♖a1) 15 ♗c7 ♕e8 16 ♘xd4. White has a temporary initiative as his opponent's pieces are a little scrunched up, but with Black's position so solid, it doesn't seem that this can last into anything significant. After 16...♖c8 (Atalik's suggestion of 16...♘c5 17 ♗b5 ♕c8 18 ♗e5, intending b2-b4, was tried out in Khalifman-Asrian, World Championship, Las Vegas 1999, when Black managed to hold the balance after 18...a6 19 ♕g4 ♗g5 20 f4 f5 with unclear play) 17 ♗b5?! (17 ♕e2 ♗c5 18 ♘b5 ♕e7 19 b4! ♗xb4 20 ♘xa7 ♖a8 20 ♘c6 ♗xc6 21 ♖xc6 is unclear according to Atalik) 17...a6 18 ♗a4 and now 18...b5 19 ♘xb5 ♘c5 20 ♘d6 ♕xa4 21 ♖xc5 ♕xd1 22 ♖xd1 ♗xe4 23 ♖c3 ♗xd6 24 ♖xd6 ♖a8 led to a draw, while 18...♗c5!? 19 ♗g3 ♗xe4 was also interesting according to Atalik. In general, this interesting idea does not quite seem to offer enough for White, but it seems like White's best try in the 11 cxd5 line. The text gives White problems very quickly.

13...♖c8 14 ♗b1 ♘7f6



15 ♗e5?!

15 ♘e5 ♗b4!? 16 ♕d3 ♘xc3 17 bxc3 ♗e4!

15...♘xc3! 16 ♖xc3

16 bxc3 ♕d5 17 ♕d3 ♕c4! 18 ♕c2 ♗e4! is very nice for Black according to Beliavsky.

16...♕d5

16...♖xc3 17 bxc3 ♕d5 18 ♕d3 ♖c8 is another good way to play.

17 ♖e3 ♖fd8 18 ♖fe1 ♕b5 19 ♘d2 ♘d7 20 a4 ♕a5 21 ♘c4 ♕b4 22 ♕d3 g6 23 b3 ♘xe5 24 ♖xe5 ♗f6 25 ♖xe6 ♖xd4 26 ♕g3 fxe6 27 ♕xg6+ ♗g7 28 ♔f1 ♗a6 29 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 30 ♕f5 ♗xc4+ 31 bxc4 ♕xe1+ 32 ♔xe1 ♖e8+ 0-1

Game 52
Arencibia-Beliavsky
Elista Olympiad 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 ♘bd7 10 ♕e2 c5

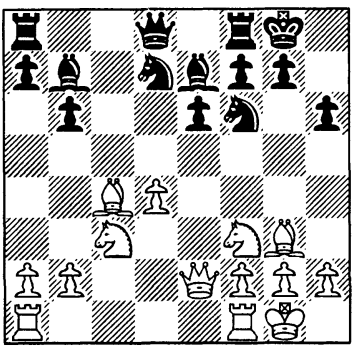
The alternative 10...♘e4 is seen later in

this chapter in Game 55.

11 ♗g3 cxd4

11...♘e4 is also popular (see Games 53 and 54), while 11...dxc4 12 ♗xc4 ♘h5 13 ♖fd1 ♘xg3 14 hxg3 ♕c7 15 d5 exd5 16 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 17 ♗xd5 was a little better for White in Shchekachev-Lupu, Bourbon-Lancy 1998.

12 exd4 dxc4 13 ♗xc4



Question 26. Hmm, so what is this IQP like then?

Answer 26. Interesting! First of all, I have to draw your attention to the huge similarity between this variation and the Karpov system of the 4 e3 Nimzo (1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e3 0-0 5 ♗d3 c5 6 ♘f3 d5 7 0-0 cxd4 8 exd4 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 b6). Many of the positional ideas for this line are taken from this variation. I actually play both so I will try and elucidate, but don't be surprised by the number of cross-references.

Question 27. So what are the differences between them?

Answer 27. There are three:

1. The position of Black's dark-squared bishop.

2. The pawn on h6.

3. The position of White's dark-squared bishop.

Strangely enough, these three are all interconnected.

Question 28. Oh no, this isn't one of these subtle, yet huge differences explanations is it?

Answer 28. I'm afraid so! First of all, let's take Black's dark-squared bishop. In a Karpov system, it would usually be on b4 whereas here it is on e7.

Question 29. It looks better on e7, doesn't it? Safer?

Answer 29. Well, in actual fact, it is on a worse and less active square here. One of the key strategical ideas of the Karpov system of the Nimzo is that Black can give up the bishop pair by playing ...♗b4xc3.

Question 30. Why? White's d-pawn is then no longer isolated!

Answer 30. Black's reasoning is the following: White's d-pawn is not in fact very vulnerable here; Black has not played to put pressure on it. For example, he has played his knight to d7 rather than to c6. Black's only opening concern has been to negate any of the active features associated with it - the IQP's 'lust to expand' as Nimzowitsch so tastefully put it, and the e5-outpost.

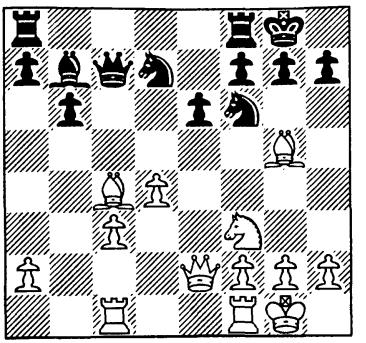
So Black has prevented d4-d5 by developing the bishop to b7 and he has neutralised the e5-outpost by placing a knight on d7 that can exchange a white knight whenever it comes to e5. Though Black has thus made himself safe from the IQP, Black is not putting any pressure on the IQP and thus not drawing any white pieces to its defence. Consequently, one of the aims of ...♗b4xc3 is to create a weakness that Black can attack: by drawing the white b-pawn on to the c-file, Black gives himself such a target.

The other aim in the Karpov line is to give Black's queen a safe square. By semi-closing the c-file, Black can play his queen to c7, which is a pivotal connecting square for Black. Of course, in the QGD variation, this is not actually possible due to the bishop on g3, which is another point in White's favour.

Question 31. Why is c7 such an important square for the black queen?

Answer 31. Well, from the Karpov variation stem add the further typical moves 10 ♕e2 ♗b7 11 ♗g5 ♘bd7 12 ♖ac1 ♗xc3

13 bxc3 ♕c7.



First of all, the general stuff – by moving the queen off the back rank, Black connects his rooks and so becomes ready to involve all his forces in the battle. Moreover, the queen eyes the pawn on c3 which will force White to spend a tempo defending it. However, there is something even more important. With this development, Black activates his unit of minor pieces.

Question 32. What do you mean?

Answer 32. With the queen on c7, the bishop on b7 and the knight on f6 both gain in power and influence. First of all, Black gains the possibility of ...♘f6-g4, threatening ...♗b7xf3 and ...♕h7xh2+; secondly, Black gains the idea of ...♗b7xf3, forcing g3xf3 due to the loose bishop on c4; and most importantly, Black also gains the idea of ...♘f6-h5-f4. This is a very annoying idea for White, harassing the queen on e2 (and his light-squared bishop as well if it returns to the natural d3-square), while combining with the light-squared bishop on b7 against the g2-square. Moreover, with the knight on d7, Black supports a later ...e6-e5 break, should it become possible. All this activity is possible only due to the presence of the queen on the pivotal c7-square. In fact, White's most common plan is to voluntarily retreat the bishop to g3 via h4 in order to shift the black queen from the b8-h2 diagonal.

Question 33. By voluntarily, you mean...

Answer 33. Without even waiting for Black to attack the bishop with ...h7-h6.

Question 34. Aha! So in the QGD variation...

Answer 34. Black has in effect wasted a tempo with ...h7-h6, driving the bishop back to a square where it wanted to go. Of course, ...h7-h6 is a very useful extra move in so many positions, but in this structure, it is not so useful. There is also one further value to having the bishop on b4. Not the fact that Black will take on c3, but the fact that *Black can threaten* to take on c3!

Question 35. I hate it when you try to be clever! What does that mean?

Answer 35. Well, while Black still has not played ...♗b4xc3, White still has to prepare for two structures – the current IQP structure as well as the possibility of the Karpov structure. And sometimes it can be very hard to combine the two effectively – to find a piece set-up that fits both structures.

Question 36. So the conclusion is...

Answer 36. That the bishop on b4 is much more active than the bishop on e7, so from this point of view, Black has an inferior Karpov system. Moreover, White's bishop has been chased to its best diagonal where it interferes with Black's best set-up. Finally, the superfluous ...h7-h6 can also prove a weakness in this type of position.

Question 37. I suppose that essentially, you're telling me that this is the problem with playing ...d5xc4 too early in the QGD lines.

Answer 37. Yes. It's not something dramatic, but once you have played ...d5xc4, unless some idea with ...♘f6-e4 really works, then you're committing yourself to an inferior version of the Karpov system of the 4 e3 Nimzo. It's not bad, and it's playable for Black, but... it's not really so nice to get an inferior version of anything!

13...♗b4!?

Question 38. Aha!

Answer 38. Yes! Now you understand the sort of thing Black is playing for!

Question 39. All the same, Black won't be able to get his queen to c7 as the bishop is on g3.

Answer 39. Black will also look at some stage to exchange off the dark-squared bishop on g3 with ...♘f6-h5xg3 and then achieve some harmony in his position by putting his queen on c7. It will take a long time though.

Question 40. Couldn't Black just play 13...♘h5 immediately?

Answer 40. Yes, this is possible and it was played in Romanishin-Portisch, Biel 1996, when 14 ♖fd1 ♘xg3 15 hxg3 ♘f6 16 ♘e5 ♗b4 17 ♖ac1 ♗xc3 18 bxc3 ♖e8 19 ♗b3 ♖c8 20 c4 ♖e7 21 ♕e3 ♖ec7 was quite unclear. White should definitely investigate 14 d5!? – see Vyzmanavin-Beliavsky later on in this note.

13...♗b4 immediately is quite interesting as it used to be thought that 13...a6 was necessary.

Question 41. Why?

Answer 41. As we shall see in the subsequent analysis, 14 ♘b5 was thought to be a good reply to 13...♗b4 from a previous Beliavsky game. Consequently, Black tried 13...a6 first and after 14 a4 only then 14...♗b4.

Question 42. 14 a4? But isn't it good for Black to have this? Why does White do this?

Answer 42. Calm down! Just consider Black's position for a moment. Why does Black play ...a7-a6?

Question 43. In order to play ...b6-b5?

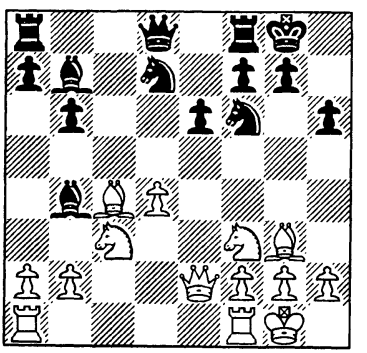
Answer 43. Exactly! Black's minor piece development is excellent – all his minor pieces are on excellent squares, but his one remaining problem is the position his major pieces. By developing so quickly and efficiently, Black has missed out on one thing that Black gets in the riskier queen's pawn defences like the QGA or the Semi-Slav: queenside space provided by his queenside pawns. For example, in the QGA, after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♕e2 b5 8 ♗b3 ♗b7, at the cost of some time, Black has a great deal more space (and less development) than in the QGD. Thus, Black always has a wider range of choice of squares for his queen. The aim after all of ...♗b4xc3 in the Karpov system is to secure a post for the queen by semi-closing the c-file. With ...b6-b5, Black hopes to gain a little more space on the queenside for his pieces and thus to free some space for his major pieces – his queen first – within the position. Thus ...b6-b5 would free b6 for the queen, for example, or even for the knight on d7. Thus 14 a4 is very logical – by preventing ...b6-b5, White prevents his opponent from freeing himself in this easy space-gaining way and forces him to look for something else.

Question 44. But it concedes the b4-square!

Answer 44. It's only a square! I know it always feels annoying to give the opponent something like this for free, but remember that the inclusion of ...a7-a6 and a2-a4 is not all roses for Black. First of all, due to White's battery along the f1-a6 diagonal, the black rook is tied to a8 in order to defend the a6-pawn, which obviously interferes with Black's activity. Moreover, if Black does play ...♗e7-b4xc3, then the b6-pawn can become a liability on the semi-open b-file as it is no longer protected by the pawn on a7 – the move ...a7-a6 really does weaken Black's queenside structure. Again, it isn't going to make the pillars of Black's position crumble, but you often find that these factors become crucial later on, for example when you consider whether to transpose into an ending or not: 'I want to go into this knight ending – if only my pawn was on a7, then he couldn't win a pawn on the queenside!' That's why playing 'good, positional' moves is always important – your sins always have a way of catching up with you!

After 13...a6 14 a4 ♘h5!? (14...♗b4 15 ♖ac1 ♗xc3 [15...♘h5 16 d5! ♘xg3 17 hxg3 exd5 18 ♘xd5 ♗c5 19 b4 ♗d6 20 ♖fd1 ♘f6 21 ♘e3! ♕e7 22 ♘h4 was rather tricky for

Black in Vyzmanavin-Beliavsky, Novosibirsk 1995] 16 bxc3 ♘e4 17 ♗h4! ♕c7 18 ♗d3 ♕c6 19 c4 was a little better for White in Mikhalchishin-Ivanchuk, Lvov 1987 – the black knight is rather misplaced on e4, as it should be on h5) 15 d5 (it seems right to take the opportunity to play this move, though 15 ♖fd1 ♘xg3 16 hxg3 ♘f6 17 ♘e5 was also interesting in Vyzmanavin-Li Wenliang, Lucerne 1993, when after 17...♕e8 instead of 18 ♕c2?! ♗d6 19 ♕e2, perhaps 19 g4!? intending a later f2-f4 and g4-g5) 15...♘xg3 16 hxg3 exd5 17 ♗xd5 (17 ♘xd5!?) 17...♗xd5 18 ♘xd5 ♖e8 19 ♖fd1 ♗c5 20 ♕c2 a5 21 ♕f5 ♘f6 22 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 23 ♕xf6 gxf6 24 ♔f1 is an edge for White due to Black's horrible kingside pawns as in Vyzmanavin-Timoshchenko, Norilsk 1987.

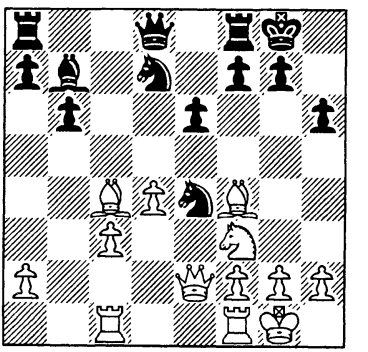


14 ♖ac1?!

In a previous game of Beliavsky's, against Ftacnik in Vienna 1986, Ftacnik had played 14 ♘b5! and it still looks convincing to me. Then 14...♘e4 (14...a6 15 ♘c7 b5 16 ♘xa8 bxc4 17 ♕xc4; 14...♘d5 15 ♗xd5! ♗xd5 16 ♘c7 ♗xf3 [16...♖c8 17 ♘xd5 exd5 18 ♕b5 wins a pawn] 17 ♕xf3 ♖c8 18 ♕b7 is clearly better for White according to Ftacnik) 15 ♗c7! ♕e8 (15...♕f6 16 a3 ♗e7 17 ♗d3! ♘g5 18 ♘e5 leaves Black's queen very awkward) 16 a3 ♗e7 17 ♗f4 ♕d8 18 ♖ac1 ♘df6 19 ♘c7 ♖c8 20 ♗a6! gives White a very nice position according to Ftacnik. This looks convincing to me, so I don't know what Beliavsky had in mind.

14...♗xc3 15 bxc3 ♘e4 16 ♗f4?!

16 ♗h4, along the lines of Mikhalchishin-Ivanchuk above, looks good enough for a slight advantage. The problem with the text is that White never gets his bishop out from in front of his c-pawn in time, and so never has time to play c3-c4 – you don't want these pawns to be blockaded on c3 and d4!



16...♖c8 17 ♘d2 ♘df6 18 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 19 ♕d3 ♕f6 20 ♗e3 ♘d6 21 ♗b3 ♗e4 22 ♕d1 ♕f5 23 f3 ♗d3 24 ♖e1 ♖c6 25 ♗f2 ♗c4 26 ♖e5 ♕f6 27 ♕e1 ♖fc8 28 h4 ♕d8 29 h5 ♕c7 30 d5 ♗xd5 31 ♗xd5 exd5 32 ♖xd5 ♘e8 33 ♗d4 ♕f4 34 ♖d1 ♖e6 35 ♕d2 ♕c7 36 ♖e1 ♘d6 37 ♗f2 ♘c4 38 ♕d4 ♖xe1+ 39 ♗xe1 ♖e8 40 ♗f2 ♘e5 41 c4 ♘xc4 42 ♖d7 ♕c6 43 ♖xa7 ♘e5 44 ♕d1 b5 45 f4 ♘c4 46 ♕d7 ♕xd7 47 ♖xd7 ♖a8 48 ♖b7 ♘d6 49 ♖b6 ♘e4 50 ♖xb5 ♖xa2 51 ♗h4 ♘c3 52 ♖b8+ ♔h7 53 ♖b4 ♘d5 54 ♖e4 f5 55 ♖d4 ♘e3 56 g3 ♘g4 57 ♖d8 ♘h2 58 ♖d3 ♖e2 59 ♖d5 ♘f3+ ½-½

We shall now examine lines where Black plays more flexibly and avoids committing himself to an early ...d5xc4 at all.

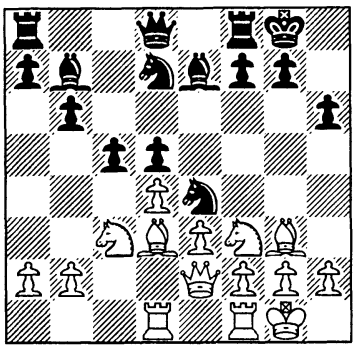
Game 53
Kramnik-Yusupov
Dortmund 1998

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7

5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 ♘bd7 10 ♕e2 c5 11 ♗g3 ♘e4 12 cxd5! exd5

12...♘xg3 13 hxg3 exd5 14 ♗a6! ♕c8 15 ♗xb7 (15 ♘xd5 ♗xa6 16 ♘xe7+ ♔h8 17 ♘xc8 ♗xe2 is good for Black) 15...♕xb7 16 dxc5 bxc5 17 e4! dxe4 18 ♘xe4 with a nice advantage for White shows a typical idea in this line: White breaks up his opponent's hanging pawns with a well-timed e3-e4!

13 ♖ad1



Question 45. So what's happening here?

Answer 45. Black has taken the opposite approach to the previous lines. Rather than create a weakness in White's position (the IQP) and then try to neutralise his initiative, Black instead tries to hold his ground in the centre.

Question 46. You always say that Black should try to keep the long diagonal free of pawns to be kind to his bishop!

Answer 46. I know, embarrassing isn't it! To be honest, I am always suspicious whenever Black plays systems like this where he tries to match White for central occupation right from the early opening (like the Tarrasch). Since Black has a tempo less than his opponent right from move one, this type of play always seems fraught in my opinion.

13...♘xg3

The nice point to 13 ♖ad1 is that the natural 13...cxd4, aiming for 14 ♘xd4 ♘xc3 damaging White's queenside pawn structure, is met by 14 ♗xe4! dxe4 (14...dxc3 15 ♗xd5! ♗xd5 16 ♖xd5 cxb2 17 ♕d2 winning a piece) 15 ♘xd4 ♕c8 16 ♘f5! with a clear advantage to White in Belov-Donev, Pravec 1989. Of course, after 13 ♖fd1 instead of 13 ♖ad1, 16...cxb2 attacks a rook on a1 so that after 17 ♕xb2 ♕e8! equalises. Note also that 13...♗f6, as in Vyzmanavin-Kotronias, Moscow 1989, is well met by 14 ♗xe4 dxe4 15 ♘e5 cxd4 and now 16 exd4 ♕e7 17 ♘xe4 ♗xe5 18 dxe5 ♘xe5 19 ♘c3 ♖fe8 20 ♖fe1 is clearly better for White according to Arkhangelsky and Vyzmanavin. The main move is 13...♘df6, as we shall see in the next game.

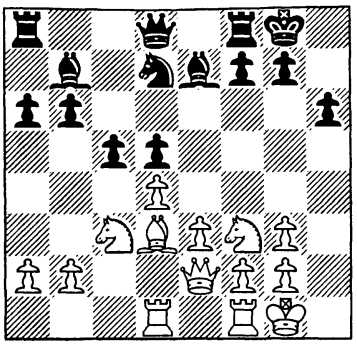
14 hxg3 a6!?

Question 47. Why?

Answer 47. One of White's major aims is to exchange off the light-squared bishops with ♗d3-a6 in order to weaken Black's defence of the d5-pawn. With ...a7-a6, Black prevents this as well as supporting a future queenside expansion plan with ...c5-c4 and ...b6-b5. Another idea is simply to defend the d5-pawn with 14...♘f6 so that after 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 ♗a6 (16 ♗c4 ♕a5 17 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 18 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 19 ♖xd5 ♕xa2 is equal according to Vyzmanavin) Black can play 16...♕b7 17 ♗xb7 ♕xb7, as in Vyzmanavin-Kolev, Burgas 1993. However, this allows 15 ♘e5!, intending f2-f4 and g3-g4-g5, making use of White's outpost on e5 with an advantage according to Vyzmanavin.

Instead Vyzmanavin-Pigusov, Moscow 1987, saw the interesting 14...♗f6. Black's idea is to cover the e5-outpost and after 15 ♗a6 ♕c8 16 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 17 dxc5 to interpose 17...♗xc3! The regrouping that White used is typical of this line: 15 ♗b1 ♖e8 16 ♖d2 a6 17 ♖c1 ♖c8 18 ♕d1 c4 19 ♘h2 g6 20 a4 ♗c6 21 ♘g4 h5 22 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 23 b3 b5 with a complicated position. Finally, Vyzmanavin obtained two good positions against Geller after 14...♕c7. After 15 ♗c2 ♖ad8 16 dxc5 ♘xc5 17 ♘d4 ♗f6 18 ♕g4 ♖fe8 19 ♖c1 ♕e5, 20 ♖fd1 g6 21 b4! h5 22 ♕f3 ♘e4 23 ♗a4! ♖e7 24 ♗c6! worked well

at Sochi 1989, and 20 ♖fe1 g6 21 b4 h5 22 ♕f3 ♘e4 23 ♗a4! worked even better at Sochi 1990!



15 dxc5 bxc5 16 ♗b1

Kramnik also suggests 16 e4 d4 17 ♘b1 with a slight advantage for White.

16...♘b6

Kramnik points out that 16...♘f6 17 e4! d4 18 e5! is very good for White.

17 a4!

A really beautiful dual-purpose positional move! White threatens a4-a5, driving the knight on b6 from the defence of d5 while allowing ♗b1-a2 increasing his pressure on the d5-pawn.

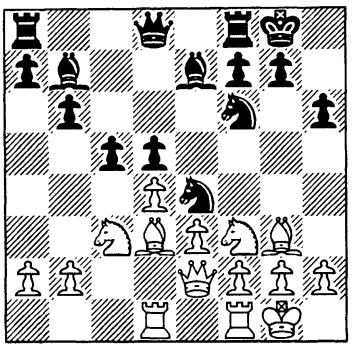
17...♗f6 18 ♕c2 g6 19 a5 ♘c4 20 ♘xd5

20 e4! was stronger according to Kramnik, who gives 20...♗xc3 21 ♕xc3 ♕xa5 22 ♕c1! ♔g7 23 exd5! as clearly better for White.

20...♘xb2 21 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 22 ♖d2 ♗xf3 23 gxf3 ♖ab8 24 f4 c4 25 e4 ♖fd8 26 e5 ♖xd2 27 ♕xd2 ♕d8 28 ♕e2 ♕d4 29 e6 ♘d3 30 ♗c2 fxe6 31 ♕xe6+ ♔g7 32 ♗a4 c3 33 ♗c2 ♖b2 34 ♕e7+ ♔g8 35 ♕e2 ♘xf4 36 gxf4 ♔f7 37 ♖d1 1-0

Game 54
Vyzmanavin-Gavrilov
Novgorod 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 b6 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 ♘bd7 10 ♕e2 ♘e4 11 ♗g3 c5 12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♖ad1 ♘df6



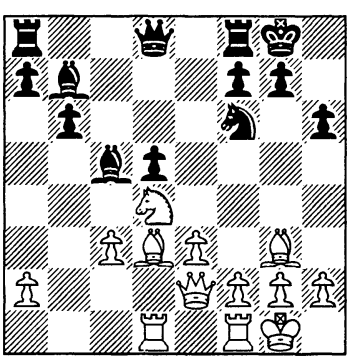
Question 48. So you think this is best?

Answer 48. Yes. It seems to me that in the other lines, Black was very half-hearted about trying to maintain his centre. If Black is really going to try to match White for central space, then he should go full out for it, and 13...♘df6 seems the most straightforward way of doing so.

14 dxc5!?

14 ♗e5 is an interesting suggestion of Vyzmanavin's and Arkhangelsky's, but 14 ♘e5 cxd4! 15 exd4 ♘xc3 16 bxc3 is not particularly good for White.

14...♘xc3 15 bxc3 ♗xc5 16 ♘d4



16...♕c8!?

A new idea, intending a quick ...♘f6-e4, attacking the c3-pawn. 16...♕e7 was the old move and then 17 ♗h4 ♕e5 18 f4 (18 ♗xf6

♕xf6 19 ♗a6 ♖ab8 was nothing special for White in Timoshchenko-A.Petrosian, USSR 1990) 18...♕d6 19 ♘b3 ♖fe8 20 ♘xc5 bxc5 21 c4 ♕e6 22 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 23 cxd5 exd5 24 e4 c4 25 ♗b1 ♖ad8 26 e5 ♕b6 27 ♔h1 ♕c6 28 f5 was very pleasant for White in Vyzmanavin-A.Petrosian, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

17 f3

Preventing ...♘f6-e4.

17...♖e8

Novikov-A.Petrosian, Yerevan 1996, saw the rather bizarre 17...♕e8, when 18 ♖fe1 ♕e7 19 ♗h4 ♖fe8 20 ♗c2 a6 21 ♕d3 g6 22 ♘b3 ♔g7 23 ♘xc5 ♕xc5 24 ♗b3 ♖ac8 25 ♖c1 ♘d7 26 ♕d4+ was very good for White.

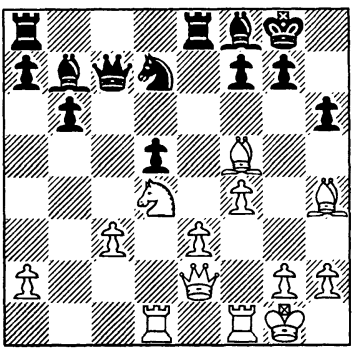
18 ♗h4

Perhaps 18 ♗b5!?

18...♘d7 19 f4 ♗f8

Intending ...♘d7-c5-e4.

20 ♗f5 ♕c7



Vyzmanavin considers the position equal here, but there are still plenty of tricks for White.

21 ♘b5 ♕c6 22 c4 ♘f6 23 ♘d4 ♕d6

Or 23...♕xc4 24 ♗d3 intending ♗xf6.

24 ♗d3 dxc4?!

24...♘e4 was better according to Vyzmanavin.

25 ♗xc4 ♘d5 26 ♘f5 ♕c5 27 ♘xh6+! gxh6 28 ♕g4+ ♔h8 29 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 30 ♗f6+ ♔h7 31 ♕f5+ ♔g8 32 ♗xd5 ♖e6 33 ♗d4 ♕c8 34 ♕g4+ ♔h7 35 f5 ♖d6 36 ♗xf7 1-0

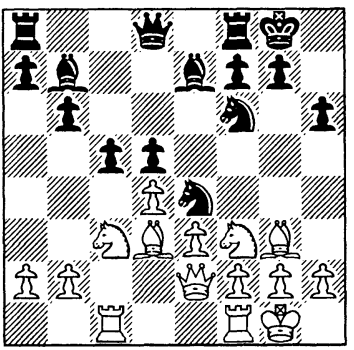
There is one related idea that Black has tried when White plays 10 ♕e2: to install his knights on e4 and f6 before playing ...c7-c5. Of course, if White plays 10 ♗g3, then this line becomes impossible and Black must go back into the previous examples with 10...c5 11 ♕e2.

Game 55
Nenashev-Vaganian
USSR Championship 1991

1 d4 e6 2 c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♗g5 ♗e7 5 e3 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 ♘f3 b6 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 ♘bd7 10 ♕e2 ♘e4 11 ♗g3 ♘df6 12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♖ac1

No-one has yet tried 13 ♖ad1, which is a little puzzling.

13...c5



14 ♖fd1

Instead Yusupov-Vaganian, Elista Olympiad 1998, was agreed drawn after 14 dxc5 bxc5 15 ♗a6 ♗xa6 16 ♕xa6 ♕b6 17 ♕e2 ♕e6 18 ♖fd1 ♖fd8.

14...♘xc3 15 ♖xc3 c4

15...♕d7!? 16 dxc5 bxc5 17 e4 is slightly better for White according to Nenashev.

16 ♗b1 b5 17 ♖cc1

Nenashev assesses this as slightly better for White.

17...♘e4 18 ♘e5 ♕e8 19 f3 ♘d6 20 ♗f4 ♗g5 21 ♔h1 ♕e6 22 ♕c2 g6 23

h4!? ♗xh4 24 ♗xh6 ♗g3! 25 ♗f4 ♗xf4 26 exf4 ♔g7 27 g4 b4 28 ♔g2 ♖h8 29 ♕d2 a5 30 ♖e1 ♕f6 31 g5 ♕e6 32 ♘g4 ♘e4 33 ♗xe4 dxe4 34 ♔g3 ♖h5 35 d5 ♕xd5 36 ♕xd5 ♗xd5 37 ♘f6 exf3 38 ♘xd5 ♖ah8 39 ♔xf3 ♖h2 40 ♖xc4 ♖xb2 41 ♘f6 ♖d8 42 ♖ce4 ♖xa2 43 ♖e8 ♖ad2 44 ♖h1 ♖2d3+ 45 ♔g4 1-0

And to wrap up the 8 ♗d3 lines, a look at ♖ac1 ideas.

Game 56
Portisch-Vaganian
St John, Candidates match 1988

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 d4 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♖c1 ♗b7 9 ♗e2

9 ♗d3 leads to the same thing.

9...dxc4!

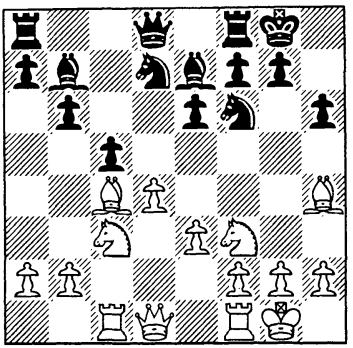
This is actually an important moment. 9...♘bd7 would allow 10 cxd5, when 10...♘xd5 is impossible due to 11 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 ♖xc7. Therefore 10...exd5 is necessary, transposing to the next main game. Personally, I'm not so happy with these fixed centre lines for Black, and I feel that Karpov systems where White has already committed his rook to c1 are fine for Black. Therefore, I would recommend this line against 9 ♗e2 and 9 ♗d3 (when fixed centre lines will be even more dangerous for Black, as in Yusupov-Kamsky in the introduction to Chapter 5).

10 ♗xc4 ♘bd7 11 0-0

Of course, this position could equally well arise from the move order 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 ♘bd7 10 ♖c1 dxc4 11 ♗xc4.

11...c5!

As we have seen earlier, ♖a1-c1 is good against ...♘f6-e4 ideas, but the rook's early development is less precise in Karpov system positions – very often, White must take advantage of Black's manoeuvrings (such as ...♘f6xh5xg3) to strike with an early d4-d5, in which case the rook should really be on d1 rather than c1. Consequently, this is what Black heads for.



12 ♕e2

12 ♗g3 ♘h5 (12...a6?! 13 d5! exd5 14 ♗xd5 ♘xd5 15 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 16 ♕xd5 ♖a7 17 ♖fd1 ♕a8 18 ♕f5 ♘f6 19 ♘e5 was very nice for White in Gheorghiu-Donev, Liechtenstein 1991 – Black must have been wishing here that he had not weakened his queenside with ...a7-a6) 13 ♖e1 ♘xg3 14 hxg3 ♘f6 (Black avoids opening the c-file and so leaves the rook on c1 looking rather useless) 15 a3 ♖c8 16 ♘e5 ♘d7 17 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 18 d5 exd5 19 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 20 ♕xd5 was agreed drawn in Piket-Van der Sterren, Dutch Championship 1991.

12...a6 13 a4

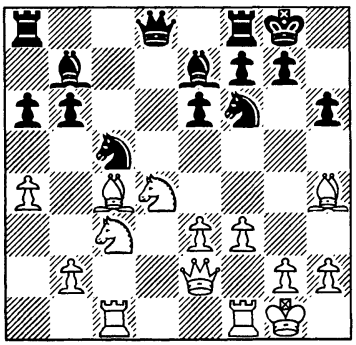
13 dxc5 ♘xc5 14 ♖fd1 ♕e8 15 ♘e5 b5 16 ♘xb5 was a game from the interminable 1984/85 Kasparov-Karpov World Championship match, when 16...♕b8! 17 ♗g3 axb5 18 ♘g6 fxg6 19 ♗xb8 bxc4 would have been clearly to Black's advantage.

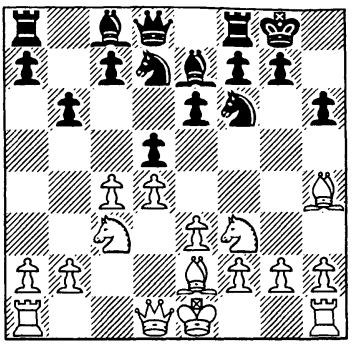
13...cxd4 14 ♘xd4!

As 14 exd4 ♘h5! 15 ♗g3 ♘xg3 16 hxg3 ♘f6 is quite a reasonable version of this position, White opts for the symmetrical option. Black's position is fine in all respects, except his queen. Once he solves this little problem, he cannot be worse.

14...♘c5 15 f3

Taking the e4-square from the black knights.





15...♕e8!

A nice move with quite a few little tactical points. Black's first threat is against the pawn on a4.

16 ♕c2

16 b3 ♘fe4! 17 ♘xe4 ♗xh4 18 ♘d6 ♕e7 19 ♘xb7 ♕xb7 equalises according to Vaganian.

16...♖c8 17 ♗a2 ♘d5!? 18 ♗xd5

18 ♗b1 g6 seems fine for Black.

18...♗xh4

With an equal position according to Vaganian. White has to be a little careful now – with his queenside pawn on a4, he can easily become worse if Black's knight gets amongst his queenside.

19 ♗xb7 ♘xb7 20 ♕b3?! ♘a5! 21 ♕d1 ♗f6 22 ♕e2 ♕d7 23 ♖fd1 ♕b7 24 ♘e4 ♗e7 25 ♕f1 ♖fd8 26 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 27 ♖c1 ½-½

In the final game of this chapter, we shall examine a different idea that Black can play after 8 ♗e2. Note that an early ...d5xc4 will transpose into the 8 ♗d3 lines examined in Games 48-50.

Game 57

Topalov-Kasparov

Sofia (rapidplay match) 1998

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗e2 ♘bd7!?

If Black wishes to avoid the disruption in his development caused when White plays ♗h4xf6 and drags the bishop on e7 to f6 instead of a knight, then Black can try this move order, which has occasionally been adopted by Garry Kasparov.

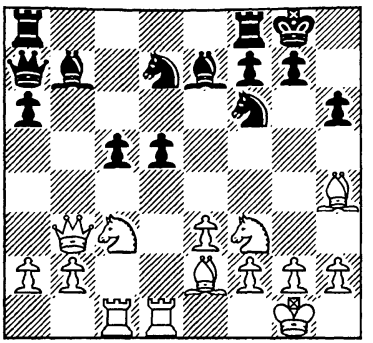
9 cxd5!

Obviously, if Black can play 9...♗b7 then he will have successfully avoided White's 9 ♗xf6 attempts so this is the most critical move. If Black tries 9...♘xd5 then after 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 ♘xd5 exd5, White has a superior version of the 8 cxd5 line as Black has played his knight to d7 early, before developing the light-squared bishop to e6. Consequently, White forces a pawn to d5 and thus blocks the light-squared bishop on b7 along the long diagonal. You feel that this should be a bit better for White, but unlike Yusupov-Kamsky in the introduction to Chapter 5, White's bishop is rather passive here on e2 rather than d3, and this seems to make some difference.

9...exd5 10 0-0 ♗b7 11 ♖c1 c5 12 ♕a4 a6 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 ♖fd1 ♕b6 15 ♕b3 ♕a7!

It is important for Black to keep the queens on – Black's queen is the glue of his position, covering all the little holes that would usually be visible. 15...♕xb3 16 axb3 ♖fd8 17 ♘e1! ♘b6 18 ♗f3 ♖d7 19 ♘d3 g5 20 ♗g3 ♖c8 21 ♘e5 ♖dd8 22 ♘c4 was clearly better for White in Lputian-Dorfman,

Tashkent 1984.



16 ♗g3 ♖ad8 17 ♖d2

Karpov-Kasparov, World Championship 1984, saw 17 ♘e1 (Geller claims an edge for White here). After 17...d4 18 exd4 cxd4 19 ♘a4 ♖c8 20 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 21 ♗c4 ♖f8 22 ♕d3! White was indeed definitely more comfortable.

17...♖fe8 18 ♕d1 ♗f8 19 ♗h4 ♕a8 20 ♘e1 ♗e7 21 ♗g3 ♘f8 22 ♘f3 ♘e6

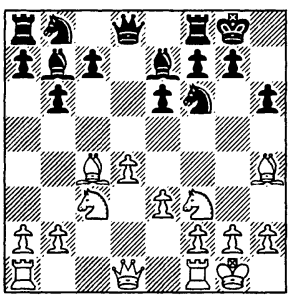
Black has reorganised here and stands well.

23 ♗h4 d4 24 exd4 cxd4 25 ♘a4 ♘f4 26 ♘c5 ♗xc5 27 ♗xf6 d3 28 ♗xd3 ♗xf3 29 gxf3 ♖d5 30 ♗h4 ♗b4 31 ♖c3 ♗xc3 32 bxc3 ♖ed8 0-1

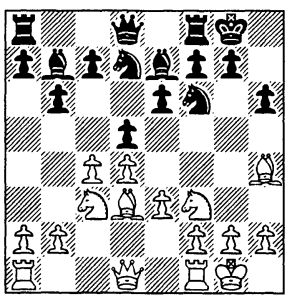
Summary
These are very interesting lines. Black must be careful since there are many move-order tricks and little traps. Personally, I prefer Beliavsky's 'Nimzo-Indian' systems to Vaganian's attempts to hold the centre, but this is more a matter of taste than anything concrete.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6

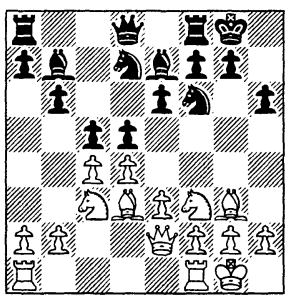
8 ♗d3
8 ♗e2
8...dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗b7 – see 8 ♗d3 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗b7 below
8...♘bd7 – *Game 57*
8 ♖c1 ♗b7 9 ♗e2 – *Game 56*
8...♗b7
8...dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗b7 10 0-0 *(D)*
10...♘e4
11 ♗xe7 – *Game 48*
11 ♘xe4 – *Game 49*
10...♘bd7 – *Game 50*
9 0-0 ♘bd7 *(D)* **10 ♕e2**
10 ♗g3 c5 11 cxd5 – *Game 51*
10 ♖c1 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 – *Game 56* (by transposition)
10...c5
10...♘e4 11 ♗g3 ♘df6 – *Game 55*
11 ♗g3 *(D)* **♘e4**
11...cxd4 – *Game 52*
12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ♖ad1
13...♘xg3 – *Game 53*
13...♘df6 – *Game 54*



10 0-0

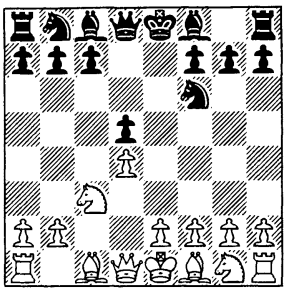


9...♘bd7



11 ♗g3

CHAPTER SEVEN



Exchange Variation: Systems with ♘f3

This chapter is extremely important for those wishing to play the Black side of the QGD.

Question 1. Oh, no! I've spent all this time sorting out the theory and now you tell me that the difficult work is still to come!

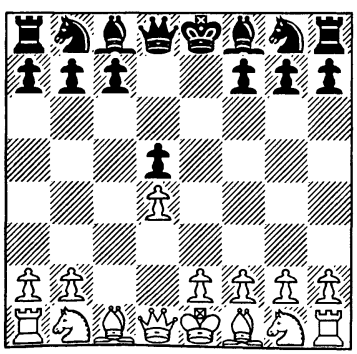
Answer 1. Not exactly. This chapter doesn't involve any effort of memory. What it does require is understanding!

Question 2. Oh dear! Why?

Answer 2. Well in this chapter, we examine the most typical structure in the QGD: a structure that Black offers his opponent with his second move.

Question 3. And this structure is ...?

Answer 3. The Exchange structure. In its simplest form, we can see it after **1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 cxd5 exd5.**



Question 4. So what is going on here?

Answer 4. First of all, let's look at the move in simple positional terms. With c4xd5, White makes several changes to the position:

1. He releases the central tension, which obviously reduces the breadth of his options.

2. He opens up two files: the c-file for himself and the e-file for Black.

3. He opens the c8-h3 diagonal for the black bishop on c8, consequently solving Black's general opening problem – that of finding an active diagonal or post for his light-squared bishop – without even first waiting for a weakness on the queenside such as ...b7-b6 as in the Tartakower system.

Question 5. This seems very odd. Why would White want to solve his opponent's development problem in this way?

Answer 5. There are several ideas behind White's 'madness'!

1. Firstly, c4xd5 fixes the central pawn structure – it forces a black pawn to the d5-square extremely early.

Question 6. Umm, yes ...and...?

Answer 6. Well, this has a very profound effect on Black's central break: ...c7-c5.

Question 7. What do you mean?

Answer 7. Well, if Black now breaks with ...c7-c5, White replies d4xc5 and gives Black an isolated IQP. Put simply, Black's typical

central break now inevitably leads to a central weakness. For example, in the Orthodox system, Black often played ...d5xc4 before either his ...c6-c5 or ...e6-e5 breaks just to avoid this problem, but here Black has no escape from this scenario. Thus by giving up some of his own central flexibility, White takes the joy out of his opponent's central break.

2. The second point revolves around the c-file. By opening this c-file, White uncovers an avenue which his heavy pieces can use to attack Black's position. Thus by targeting the c-pawn with ♖a1-c1 and ♕d1-c2, White can force a reaction on the queenside from Black.

3. The restriction of Black's light-squared bishop. White's idea is to prevent his opponent from activating his light-squared bishop on any useful square along the c8-h3 diagonal and thus to deny him the benefits of playing ...e6xd5 at such an early stage.

Question 8. How can White do that?

Answer 8. By playing either his light-squared bishop or his queen to the h7-b1 diagonal to deprive the bishop of its only really active post: the f5-square. Note that c2 is an excellent square for the white queen as it both deprives the light-squared bishop of the f5-square and prepares to line up with the a rook on c1 against the pawn on c7.

Question 9. So to summarise:

Answer 9. White's three aims are:

1. To deter Black from carrying out his central ...c7-c5 break by fixing the central structure at an early stage.

2. To give his major pieces a chance to get at Black's position along the c-file.

3. To nullify the benefits to Black of an early ...e6xd5 by depriving the light-squared bishop of any access to the h7-b1 diagonal.

Question 10. One thing puzzles me – how on earth can White really stop his opponent from getting his bishop to f5 – it seems that Black will always have time?

Answer 10. Well, that's a very important point: we now come to the all-important matter of move orders.

Question 11. Oh dear!

Answer 11. Well, there are many move-order points to this structure so we shall deal with all of them at once.

The first point is that White can only fight for an advantage if he prevents the light-squared bishop from coming to f5, or alternatively if he extracts such concessions that getting the bishop to f5 is a self-defeating proposition for Black. Thus, when we talk about playing the Exchange variation, we have this as a prerequisite goal before entering this structure.

If White wishes to force the Exchange variation, he should do so via the 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 (or 3...♗e7) 4 cxd5 exd5 move order. However, if he wishes to do this, he will also have to make certain other choices against other lines.

Question 12. What do you mean?

Answer 12. Consider this. If Black introduces the QGD via the move order 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6, how does White play?

Question 13. Well, 3 ♘c3 I suppose and after 3...d5, then ...

Answer 13. Yes, but do you want to play against the Nimzo-Indian if Black plays 3...♗b4? If not, then you can't play 3 ♘c3.

Question 14. And if I play 3 ♘f3?

Answer 14. Then Black plays 3...d5 and from this position, you cannot force a real Exchange variation as we shall see.

Then there is another point. If after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3, Black plays 3...c6, are you prepared to play the Semi-Slav type positions after 4 ♘f3 dxc4 or 4 e3 f5!?, or to spend a lifetime learning the 4 e4 Marshall Gambit? Or do you, like Kramnik, wish to play more quietly against such lines and play something like 3 ♘f3 c6 4 ♕c2 for example?

Question 15. Aha, so what you are saying is...

Answer 15. If you want to play the Exchange variation against the QGD at all times, then you must be prepared to play the

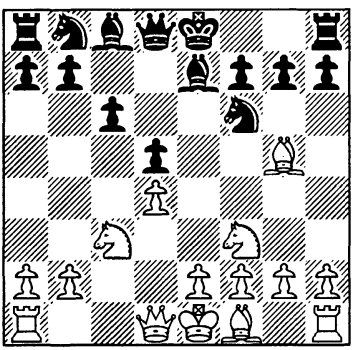
Nimzo Indian and you must accept that your options against the Semi-Slav hybrid systems are more limited and perhaps sharper than may be ideal. Of course, if you are sure that your opponent only plays the QGD, then you can risk playing an early ♘c3 but if not...!

Question 16. Okay, but why is it that White can't force the exchange schemes after 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5? For example if he goes 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗g5?

Answer 16. Well, let's have a look ...

Game 58
Beim-Korneev
Frankfurt 1997

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗g5



6...c6

I have tweaked the actual move order here to fit into our theme (the players actually reached this line via a Semi-Slav hybrid).

Question 17. Wasn't 6...♗f5 possible?

Answer 17. No, because 7 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 8 ♕b3 forks b7 and d5 and nets White a pawn. The text protects the d5-pawn and intends to solve all Black's problems on the next move with ...♗c8-f5.

7 ♕c2

As 7 e3 (intending 8 ♗d3) 7...♗f5! is fine for Black (see Game 75), White uses his queen to prevent the immediate development of the bishop to f5.

7...g6!

Question 18. This looks rather weakening.

Answer 18. It does weaken the kingside dark squares it is true, but it also forces White to take drastic action in order to prevent his opponent from achieving his plan of ...♗f5 with a gain of tempo on the white queen.

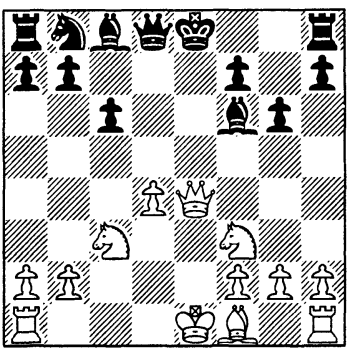
8 e4!?

8 e3 ♗f5! is nothing for White, as we shall see in Games 73 and 74.

8...dxe4!

Not 8...♘xe4? 9 ♗xe7 and now 9...♔xe7, as in Karpov-Yusupov, USSR 1988, is forced as 9...♕xe7 loses to 10 ♘xd5!

9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 ♕xe4+



10...♔f8!?

The simplest, though 10...♕e7 is also playable. After 11 ♗c4 0-0 12 0-0 (12 ♕xe7 ♗xe7 13 0-0 ♗f5 14 ♖fe1 ♗f6 15 h3 h5 16 ♘e5 ♘d7 17 ♘e4 ♗xe5 18 dxe5 ♘xe5 19 ♘f6+ ♔g7 20 ♘xh5+ gxh5 21 ♖xe5 ♔f6 was quite equal in Murshed-Serper, Dhaka 1995) 12...♗f5 13 ♕f4 (13 ♕xe7 ♗xe7 would transpose to the previous note) 13...♕b4 14 ♘e5 ♗xe5 15 dxe5 ♗e6 16 ♘e4 ♕xc4 17 ♖ac1 ♕b5 18 a4 ♕a5 19 ♘f6+ ♔g7 20 ♘h5+ gxh5 21 ♕g5+ led to a draw by perpetual in Gulko-Yusupov, Munich 1990.

11 ♗c4 ♔g7 12 0-0 ♖e8 13 ♕f4 ♗e6 14 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 15 ♖fe1 ♕d6 16 ♕xd6 ♖xd6 17 ♖e8!?

17 ♘e4 ♖d8 18 ♘xf6 ♔xf6 19 ♖e4 ♘a6 20 ♖ae1 ♖d7 21 ♘e5 ♖c7 was equal in Lastin-Korneev, Russian Championship 1996.

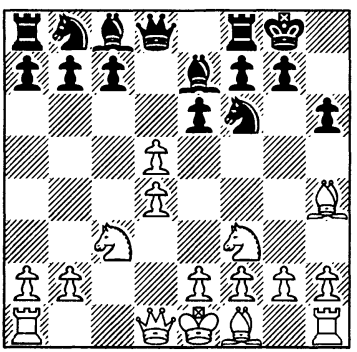
17...♖d8 18 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 19 ♖e1 ♘d7 20 g4 h6 21 ♔g2 ♔f8 22 ♖e2 ♘f6 23 h3 ♗b6 24 ♘a4 ♖e8 25 ♘xb6 axb6 26 ♔g3 b5 27 h4 b4 28 g5 hxg5 29 hxg5 ♘d5 30 a3 bxa3 31 bxa3 ♖a8 32 ♖b2 b5 33 ♖b3 ♘b6 34 ♘e5 ♘c4 35 ♘xc4 bxc4 36 ♖c3 ♔e7 37 ♖xc4 ♖xa3+ 38 ♔f4 ♔d6 39 ♖b4 ♖a5 40 f3 ♖f5+ 41 ♔g4 f6 42 gxf6 ♖xf6 43 ♖b8 g5 44 ♖b3 ♔d5 45 ♔xg5 ♖f8 46 f4 ♔xd4 ½-½

Question 19. Okay, maybe White took on d5 too soon. What about after 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 and only now 7 cxd5?

Answer 19. That's not a bad question!

Game 59
Krasenkov-Beliavsky
Yerevan Olympiad 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 cxd5



7...♘xd5!

Question 20. Aha!

Answer 20. We've seen this very natural idea in both the Tartakower and Orthodox chapters! Black uses the opposition of the dark-squared bishops to exchange minor pieces and greatly free his position. Black can also play this after 5...0-0 6 cxd5, though of course it is very useful for Black to have the pawn on h6 as White no longer has the chance of gaining any tempi against the pawn on h7.

Question 21. And 7...exd5 8 e3 ♗f5...

Answer 21. ...Fails once again to 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 ♕b3!

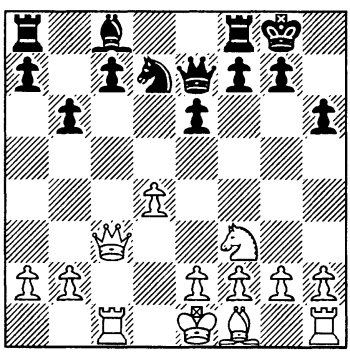
8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 ♕b3

The natural 9 e4 gives Black rapid counterplay against the d4-pawn after 9...♘xc3 10 bxc3 c5 11 ♗e2 ♖d8 followed by ...c5xd4 and ...♘b8-c6. The exotic 9 g3 led to a draw in Miladinovic-Yusupov, Elista Olympiad 1998, after 9...♘xc3 10 bxc3 c5 11 ♗g2 ♘c6 12 0-0 ♖d8 13 ♕a4.

9...♘d7! 10 ♖c1

Not 10 ♘xd5 exd5 11 ♕xd5 ♕b4+!

10...♘xc3 11 ♕xc3 b6!



12 e3

12 ♕xc7 ♗a6! 13 ♘e5 ♖fc8 14 ♘c6 ♕g5! 15 f4 ♖xc7 16 fxg5 ♖ac8 17 ♘e7+ ♔f8 wins for Black according to Mikhail Gurevich.

12...♗b7 13 b4

13 ♗b5 c6 14 ♗e2 c5 15 0-0 ♖fc8 16 ♖fd1 cxd4 17 ♕xd4 ♖xc1 18 ♖xc1 ♖c8 was just equal in M.Gurevich-Marciano, French Team Championship 1995.

13...♖ac8 14 ♗e2 e5 15 dxe5 c5 16 b5 ♖fe8 17 0-0 ♘xe5 18 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 19 ♕xe5 ♖xe5 20 ♖fd1 ♔f8 21 ♗c4 ♖c7 22 ♖c3 ♗c8 23 f3 ♗e6 24 ♔f2 ♗xc4 ½-½

Past this point of course, it gets rather difficult for White to force an exchange line:

for example, after 5...h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 we are in a Tartakower or after 7...♘e4 we have a Lasker variation.

Question 22. But wait a minute: I'm going to play the 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 move order for Black, play the Nimzo-Indian against 3 ♘c3 and only play the QGD if White goes 3 ♘f3, when I go for the Tartakower. Why do I need to look at this chapter?

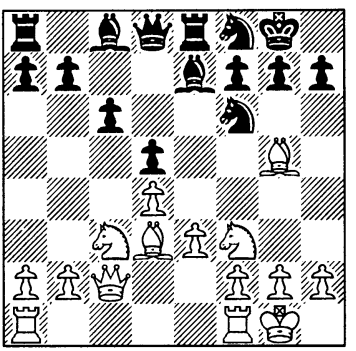
Answer 22. This is actually a very important part of opening preparation. As a young International Master, I used to devote much of my time analysing the very sharpest variations, hoping all the time that I would get the chance to engage my opponent in sharp variations that I had prepared at home. After a while, I began to notice something: I was losing lots of games in 'unimportant variations'. My opponents rarely seemed to 'take me on' but instead played quiet variations, just aiming for a typical position. I hadn't looked at these normal positions, hadn't thought about them, and didn't understand very much about them. This meant that even good versions of the theoretical line ended badly for me because I didn't understand why they were good, what exactly made the difference, and what I could aim for in this position that I couldn't in others. It's all part of your education in an opening – knowing the typical endings, the typical structures from an opening so that when your knowledge of previously played games runs out, you don't lose, or just have to offer a draw, but you can play on to win because you understand the simple positions better than your opponent. So, no you may never get this exactly, but you will get something like it as soon as you play the QGD, and you will play that position ten times better if your all-round education in the opening is good.

We shall now consider the Exchange variation in some detail. This chapter deals with systems in which White places his king's knight on f3, while in the next chapter we shall move on to plans with the knight on e2.

The positions in the rest of this chapter generally arise from three different openings: the Orthodox QGD, the 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 cxd5 move order and the Cambridge Springs (1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♗g5 ♘bd7 5 ♘f3 c6).

Game 60
Van der Sterren-L.Hansen
Wijk aan Zee 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 ♗g5 ♘bd7 6 cxd5 exd5 7 e3 ♗e7 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 ♕c2 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♘f8



Via a Semi-Slav, then a Cambridge Springs, we reach the main position of this line.

Question 23. Tell me what is going on!

Answer 23. The first things to look for when trying to assess a position are the pawn breaks.

Question 24. Why?

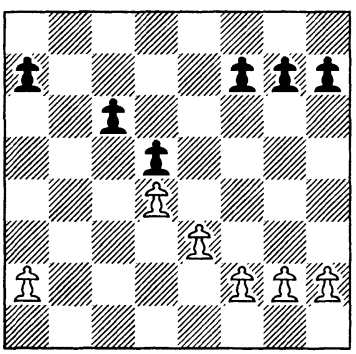
Answer 24. In such a position where the structures of both sides are so solid and flawless, pawn breaks are the key method of adding dynamism to the position. By engaging the opponent's pawn structure in hand-to-hand combat, you hope to soften up his position for a later assault by the big guns.

Question 25. So White has the e3-e4 break and Black has the ...c6-c5 break. Neither of them look great though.

Answer 25. That is quite true. Both these breaks involve structural weakness on both sides, in the form of an IQP. It is clear that for either of these to work, there will have to be a specific dynamic or tactical reason. But in fact, both sides have another way to engage the opponent's position.

Question 26. You mean b2-b4-b5 and ...f7-f5-f4?

Answer 26. Yes. As this involves a lesser force of pawns attacking a greater force (White's three queenside pawns against Black's four, for example) this is known as the 'minority attack'. In this case, it is clear that White's b2-b4-b5 assault is much easier to achieve than Black's ...f7-f5-f4; consequently it is clear that the dynamism in this position lies mainly with White. White's idea is that after b5xc6, ...b7xc6, the black structure is greatly weakened: there is a backward pawn on the c-file and the a-pawn has been isolated.



Question 27. And Black must aim for ...f7-f5-f4?

Answer 27. No, it is just too hard to achieve. Black's energy is taken up with two matters: dealing with White's plan and freeing his own position by exchanges.

Question 28. So, what does Black want to exchange, and how?

Answer 28. Black's exchanging strategy concentrates on both bishops.

Question 29. So first of all, the light-squared bishops.

Answer 29. This is Black's general desire, of course, in the QGD from move two onwards! By exchanging off the bishop, Black frees his queenside, while exchanging the bishop, which is restricted by his central pawn chain.

Question 30. It doesn't seem very easy though!

Answer 30. Black has a typical and cunning manoeuvre in ...g7-g6 followed by ...♘f8-e6-g7 and then ...♗c8-f5, as we shall see in the game.

Question 31. Neat! And the dark-squared bishops?

Answer 31. This is much less of a heartfelt desire from Black's point of view. It is simply that the white bishop on g5 is a point of pressure on Black's position - for example, 11...♘e6 is impossible due to 12 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 13 ♗xh7+ - and such points of pressure have to be removed or they will become thorns in Black's side sooner or later. Black has several ways of attempting this:

1. The most obvious way is to move the knight on f6 to offer the exchange of bishops. Neither h5 nor g4 are great squares: the knight will have to return to f6 which makes these moves slight time-wasters, so this leaves two possibilities:

a) ...♘f6-e4. This is the most natural move. Black uses the semi-open e-file to establish his knight on e4 while offering the exchange of bishops. To this White has two main replies:

a1) ♗g5-f4, avoiding the exchange of pieces and putting the question to Black's knight on e4 and

a2) ♗g5xe7 followed by ♗d3xe4 ...d5xe4, ♘f3-d2 and then central action with either d4-d5 or f2-f3.

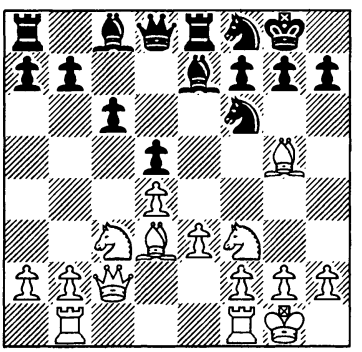
Note that White often plays ♗g5xf6 (as in the Tartakower variation) just to prevent the knight from coming to e4. Although this gives up the bishop pair, it drags the bishop away from the f8-a3 diagonal where it

belongs (on f6, it merely bites against the granite on d4) and prevents Black from using the outpost on e4 as his other knight is too far away.

b) ...♘f6-d7. Black prepares to transfer the knight to b6 with tempo. From here, it defends Black's queenside whilst eyeing the c4-square (which White weakens when he plays b2-b4).

While it is correct to concentrate on White's queenside intentions, we should also mention his other key resource - the knight outpost on e5. Although he cannot immediately make use of it (11 ♘e5 is well met by 11...♘g4! here, exchanging pieces) it is a recurrent motif in all of White's plans.

11 ♖ab1



This is White's most direct idea. His break is b2-b4-b5 so White just supports it! Other possibilities which we will consider are 11 h3 (Games 62-65), 11 ♖ae1 (Game 66) and 11 a3 (Game 77).

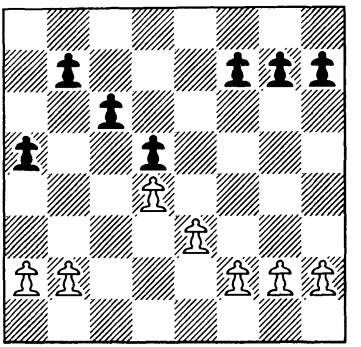
11...g6

This is actually a very crucial moment in the game.

Question 32. Why?

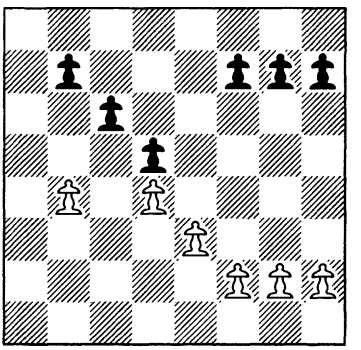
Answer 32. With this move, Black takes a certain approach to White's queenside operations. As I was taught by Mark Dvoretsky, Black has a multitude of ways of dealing with White's queenside play and now is as good a time as any to explain them to you.

First of all, Black can play ...a7-a5 to hold back b2-b4.



White reacts by playing a2-a3 and then b2-b4 anyway. Black now has two possibilities: to take it or to leave it.

Question 33. So what is the idea if Black takes it?

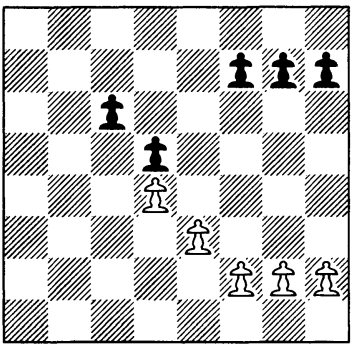


Answer 33. By taking off the a-pawns, Black hopes to minimise the chance of heavy losses on the queenside. The b5xc6 exchange will no longer create an isolated pawn on the a-file, so that is one pawn less to defend and one less to lose if things go wrong! Also Black gains the a-file (which White abandoned with ♖a1-b1 to support his b-pawn), along which he can hope to stir up some trouble.

Question 34. And what are the drawbacks to this idea?

Answer 34. As Black's central and

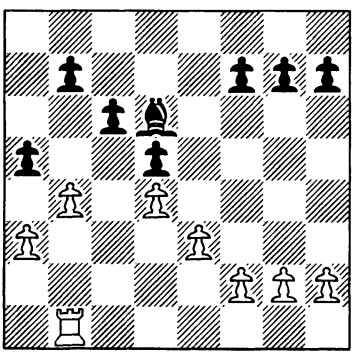
queenside structure is on light squares, Black inevitably has problems on the dark squares in any minority assault. By removing the pawn on a7, Black removes his pawn protection of the b6-square, which is now a very useful attacking square for White. After b2-b4-b5xc6



White can use the b6-square for his rook, for example, to attack the weak c6-pawn. Note that this leads to the same structure as after ...a7-a6, a2-a4 and b2-b4-b5 ...a6xb5, a4xb5.

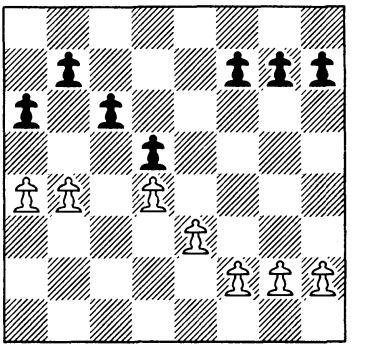
Question 35. But why play ...a7-a5 and then not even take the opportunity to capture the b4-pawn?

Answer 35. This is based on a really cunning idea!



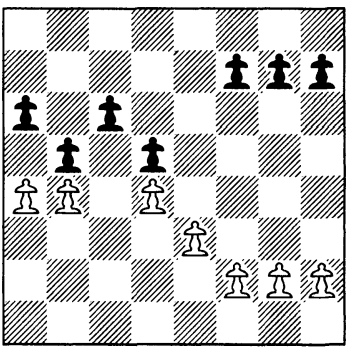
By luring the pawn to a3, Black ensures that he delays b4-b5 as the pawn on a3 will hang!

Another idea for Black is to play ...a7-a6 so that White has to play a2-a4 to force through b4-b5



and now:

1. Black plays ...b7-b5.



This prevents White's b4-b5 break at the cost of an exceptionally weak c6-pawn. This idea is best implemented when a white knight does not have access to the e5-square, or when a black knight is ready to jump into the c4-square. We saw a successful example of this in the Tartakower in the notes to the Game 41.

2. Black waits for b2-b4-b5 and then

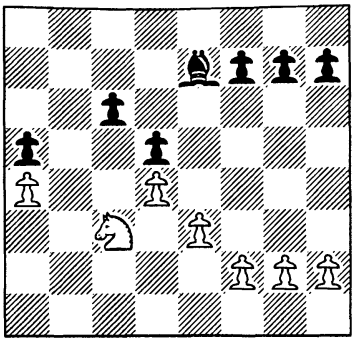
2a. Black takes on b5, simply transposing to the ...a5xb4 lines.

2b. Black plays ...a6-a5.

see following diagram

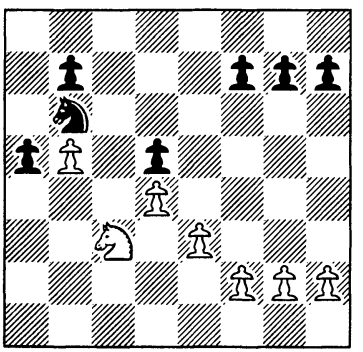
Question 36. This makes no sense! Why

play ...a7-a6 and then ...a6-a5?



Answer 36. Black's idea is that by luring the white pawn to a4, he has taken that square away from the white knight on c3 so that the manoeuvre ♘a4-c5 is now impossible. Typically, this idea is seen when White has already taken the knight on f6 with his bishop so that Black has the only dark-squared bishop on the board. Consequently, he can even block the b-file sometimes with ...♗e7-b4.

c) Black plays ...c6xb5, a4xb5 ...a6-a5 often followed by a quick ...♘b6.



Question 37. Doesn't this just isolate the black d-pawn?

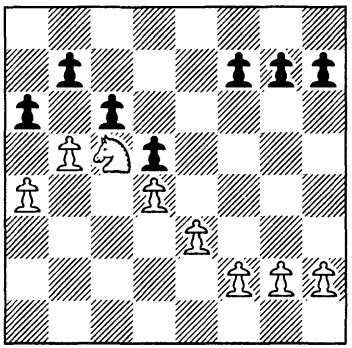
Answer 37. It does, but there are several factors in Black's favour to compensate:

1. The knight on b6 has a superb outpost on c4 to aim for.

2. The queenside is kept reasonably closed: White has only opened the c-file, and his queen is there, whereas Black is ready to bring a rook over to challenge it.

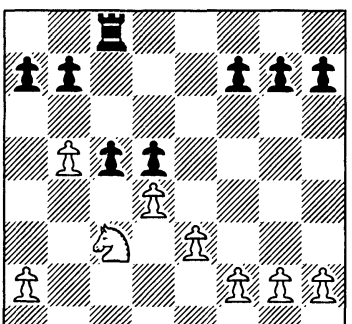
Note that Black must follow up this idea with ...♘b6 ideally, or ...b7-b6. If not, then White may play b5-b6 and ♘c3-b5 and suddenly the problems are all Black's.

In particular against ...a7-a6, but also against ...a7-a5, White has another idea apart from a2-a4: Botvinnik's recommendation of playing a knight to c5 first before following up with a2-a4 and b4-b5.



Here, it is exceptionally hard to dislodge a knight from c5 as ...b7-b6 loses a pawn to ♘c5xa6.

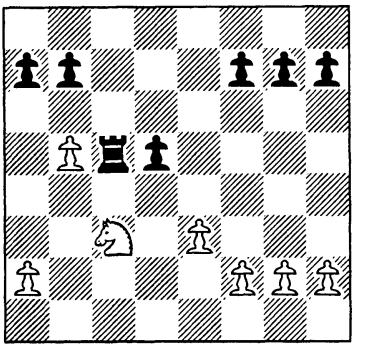
Black's final idea is to play to meet b4-b5 with ...c6-c5.



Question 38. Doesn't this just allow White to isolate the black d-pawn with d4xc5?

Answer 38. Yes, but these isolated pawn

positions where White has a pawn on b5 are not really so great for him. I refer you for example to the game Gretarsson-Yusupov in the notes to Game 38. After ...♖c8xc5



the knight on c3 is very uncomfortable on the open c-file: it has to protect the pawn on b5, but it is unsettled on c3 – it needs the support of a pawn on b2!

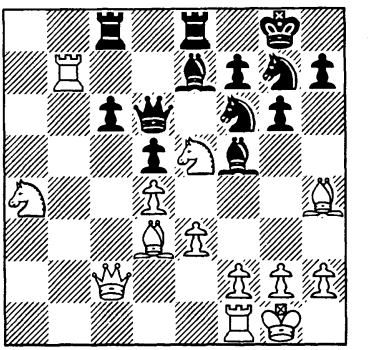
We will see practical examples of all of these ideas later in this chapter, but whenever you are faced by a minority attack, these are your options!

In this case, I feel that Black chose the wrong one. 11 ♖ab1 attempts to implement White's plan in the fastest manner possible without any subtlety or preventive moves. By ignoring White's idea and concentrating on his slow exchanging plans, Black invites pressure on to himself. I would prefer 11...a5 12 a3 ♗d6! Here, as in Alterman-Gabriel, Bad Homburg 1996. Black has the idea of ...♘f8-g6 and then ...h7-h6 to force White to play ♗g5xf6, but without diverting the black dark-squared bishop from the f8-a3 diagonal, and after 13 ♖fe1 (looking for e3-e4 to try to exploit the pin on the knight on f6 by the bishop on g5) then 13...♗g4! 14 ♘d2 ♗h5 15 ♘f1 ♗g6 16 b4 axb4 17 axb4 h6 18 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 19 b5 ♗xd3 20 ♕xd3 ♘g6 21 bxc6 the game was agreed drawn. We shall see 11...♘g6!? in the next game.

12 b4 ♘e6 13 ♗h4 a6 14 a4 ♘g7 15 b5 axb5 16 axb5 ♗f5 17 bxc6 bxc6 18 ♘e5!

One of the drawbacks of taking the queen's knight from d7 to g7 is that it gives the white knight the e5-square for free.

18...♖c8 19 ♖b7 ♕d6 20 ♘a4!



This excellent move puts Black in a great deal of trouble. Here, it is the knight that heads for b6, making use of Black's weak queenside dark squares.

20...♗xd3

Here 20...♘e4 was a trickier defensive chance. We shall examine this position in some detail to try to get an idea of Black's defensive resources in a bad minority attack position.

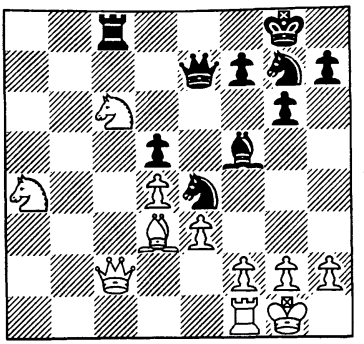
Black's position is obviously under a great deal of pressure: White's minority attack has 'diluted' his opponent's structure so that all that remains of Black's once solid queenside is now the sickly pawn on c6. White has occupied the outpost on e5 and has a great deal of pressure along the important h4-d8 diagonal.

20...♘e4 seeks to gain some counterplay by giving up the sickly c6-pawn. After 21 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 22 ♖xe7 ♕xe7, 23 ♖c1 keeps the pressure and is not pleasant for Black, but if White ambitiously grabs the pawn with 23 ♘xc6

see following diagram

he exposes himself to a nasty pin along the c-file. Black now has two possibilities:

23...♕f6 and 23...♕b7.



a) 23...♕f6 24 ♗b5! (24 ♖c1 ♗d7!? [24...♘xf2! 25 ♗xf5 ♘xf5 26 ♘b6 ♘xe3! 27 ♘e7+ ♔g7 28 ♕xc8 ♘d3!? is also possible] 25 ♗b5 ♗xc6 26 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 27 ♕xc6 ♕xf2+ 28 ♔h1 ♕xe3 29 ♕c8+ ♘e8 gives Black good play, as 30 ♕xe8+ ♔g7 31 ♕e5 ♔h6 is not what White is looking for! 30 h3 ♔g7! gives Black reasonable chances) 24...♗d7 25 ♘b6! (the key move) 25...♖xc6 (25...♗xc6 26 ♘xd5 ♕e6 27 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 28 ♕xc6 ♕xc6 29 ♘e7+ wins) 26 ♗xc6 ♕xc6 27 ♕xc6 ♗xc6 28 ♖c1 ♗b7 29 ♘xd5! gives White a clear advantage.

b) 23...♕b7 is logical to prevent ♗d3-b5 ideas. After 24 ♖c1, 24...♘d6! is best as 24...♔h8 (intending ...♗f5-d7) is met by 25 ♕b2! ♕xb2 (25...♖xc6 26 ♕xb7 ♖xc1+ 27 ♗f1 ♘d2 28 ♕b8+ ♗c8 29 g3 ♘xf1 30 ♔g2! intending ♘a4-c5) 26 ♘xb2 ♗d7 27 ♗xe4 dxe4 28 d5! with a clear advantage. After 24...♘d6 25 ♗xf5 ♘gxf5, 26 ♕c5 is met by 26...♘c4! 27 ♘a5 ♕a8! so 26 g4 seems best, but after 26...♘e7 (26...♘h4 27 ♕c5! ♕d7 28 h3 ♕e6 29 ♘c3!) 27 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 28 ♕d1 Black is clearly worse, but not yet lost.

This is a common theme in this line, and in chess in general in fact – by losing a sickly pawn, you often gain a surprising amount of activity – somehow, the very square that the pawn stood on seems 'jinxed' and as soon as White occupies it, the energy drains from his own position!

21 ♕xd3 ♘e4 22 ♗xe7

22 ♖d7! ♕e6 23 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 24 ♕a6! is given by Van der Sterren as winning, but I think that Black can still fight with 24...♖ee8 25 ♖xf7 ♖a8 26 ♕b7 ♘f5!?, when the knight on a4 has a few problems.

22...♖xe7 23 ♖xe7 ♕xe7 24 ♕a6 ♕e8 25 ♘b6 ♖c7 26 ♖c1 ♘e6 27 f3?

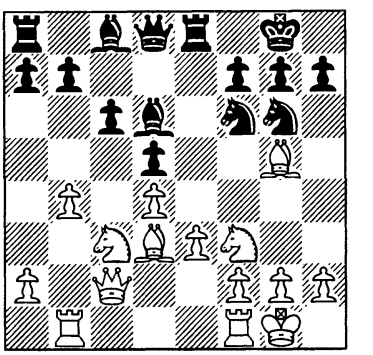
27 ♕a4! is again a good suggestion of Van der Sterren, though after 27...♕b8 28 ♕a8! ♕xa8 29 ♘xa8 ♖a7 30 ♘b6 ♖a6 31 ♘bd7 the game is still not completely over. The text allows the game to fizzle out.

27...♘f6 28 ♘a8 ♖c8 29 ♘b6 ♖c7 30 ♘a4 ♘d7! 31 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 32 ♘c5 ♘xc5 33 ♖xc5 ♕e7 34 ♕d3 ½-½

An interesting game that shows the defensive resources available to Black.

Game 61
Dydyshko-Kveinys
Moscow Olympiad 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗g5 0-0 7 e3 ♖e8 8 ♗d3 ♘bd7 9 0-0 ♘f8 10 ♕c2 ♘g6 11 ♖ab1 c6 12 b4 ♗d6



By a strange inversion of moves, we have transposed into the position after 11 ♖ab1 ♘g6 12 b4 ♗d6 in the previous game. Against 11 ♖ab1, I think the ...♗e7-d6 idea is the best way, though throwing in ...a7-a5 first

seems very logical.

13 b5!? h6! 14 ♗xf6

14 ♗xh6 gxh6 15 ♗xg6 fxg6 16 ♕xg6+ ♔h8 17 ♕xh6+ ♘h7 leads to nothing (Dydyshko).

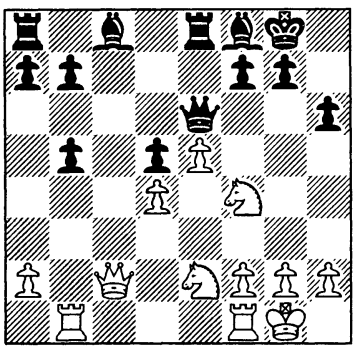
14...♕xf6 15 e4!

15 ♖fe1 ♗g4 16 ♘d2 ♘h4 gives Black a powerful initiative according to Dydyshko.

15...♘f4! 16 e5 ♕e6 17 ♘e1

17 exd6?! is dubious (Dydyshko) due to 17...♕g4 18 ♘e1 ♖xe1 19 f3 ♖xf1+ and now 20 ♗xf1 ♕d7! 21 ♖e1 ♘e6! is safe for Black.

17...♗f8 18 ♘e2 ♘xd3 19 ♘xd3 cxb5!? 20 ♘df4!



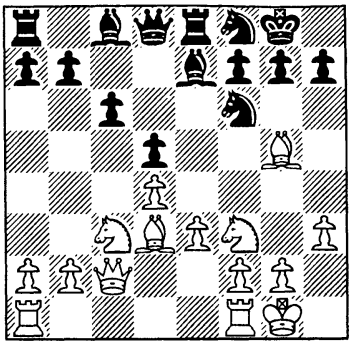
20...♕g4?

20...♕c6!? was stronger according to Dydyshko with a murky position after 21 ♕b3 b4 22 ♖fc1 ♕a6 23 ♖c7 ♗e6 24 ♖bc1.

21 ♖xb5 b6 22 h3 ♕g5 23 ♖b3 ♗f5 24 ♕c6 ♗e4 25 ♖g3 ♖ec8 26 ♕b5 ♕d8 27 ♘c3 ♗f5 28 ♘cxd5 ♕h4 29 ♕b3 ♔h8 30 ♘e3 ♕xf4 31 ♕xf7! ♕xd4 32 ♘xf5 ♕xe5 33 ♘xh6 ♗c5 34 ♘f5 ♖c6 35 ♖xg7 ♖h6 36 ♘xh6 ♕xg7 37 ♕h5 ♖f8 38 ♘g4+ ♕h7 39 ♕e5+ ♕g7 40 ♕h5+ ♕h7 1-0

Game 62
Ruban-Panchenko
Elista 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 c6 5 ♗g5 ♘bd7 6 cxd5 exd5 7 e3 ♗e7 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 ♕c2 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♘f8 11 h3



Question 39. What on earth is this for?

Answer 39. This favourite move of Karpov's has many points:

1. It takes control of the g4-square. This has two benefits:

1a. It prevents any manoeuvre such as ...♗c8-g4-h5-g6.

1b. It allows White to make use of his central outpost with ♘f3-e5 as Black no longer has the riposte ...♘f6-g4.

2. It provides a retreat square on h2 if Black chases the white bishop from g5.

3. It keeps White's options extremely flexible. For example, since White does not commit the rook to b1, he is always ready to switch to a central thrust plan with ♖a1-e1 and e3-e4 or ♘f3-e5. Of course, it doesn't have quite as much drive on the queenside as 11 ♖ab1.

11...g6

As White's queenside play is a move slower, the exchanging plan is much more tempting for Black than in the 11 ♖ab1 line. The alternatives 11...♗e6 and 11...♘e4 are considered in the Games 64 and 65.

12 ♖ab1

White can also try 12 ♗xf6, as in Game 63.

12...♘e6

12...a5 13 a3 ♘e6 leads to very similar play.

13 ♗h6 ♘g7 14 b4 a6 15 a4 ♗f5! 16

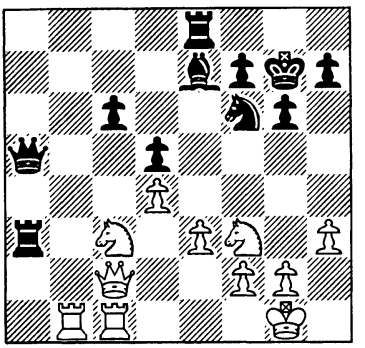
♗xg7

16 ♘e5 is the subject of Game 70.

16...♗xd3 17 ♕xd3 ♔xg7 18 b5 axb5 19 axb5 ♖a3 20 bxc6! bxc6

20...♕a5 21 ♖fc1 ♗b4 fails to 22 cxb7 ♖b8 23 ♘e5 according to Ruban.

21 ♕c2 ♕a5 22 ♖fc1



Question 40. How is this for Black?

Answer 40. This type of position is quite critical because you can imagine it arising from so many different minority attacks. We shall thus analyse it carefully.

Question 41. Can't Black just break free with 22...c5?

Answer 41. No, because 23 ♖b5 (Ruban's 23 dxc5!? ♕xc5 24 ♕d2 is also interesting, threatening ♘c3-b5. After 24...♕a5 25 ♖b5 ♕a6 26 ♕b2! ♖c8 27 ♘d4 White stands very nicely indeed.) 23...♕a6 24 ♕b2 is very nice for White and transposes above after 24...cxd4 25 ♘xd4. Perhaps 24...c4!? 25 ♘xd5 ♖a2 26 ♕b1 ♘xd5 27 ♖xd5 c3!? gives Black some counterplay. I prefer the simple 22...♗d6, activating the bishop by covering the e5-square and allowing Black to challenge the b-file with ...♖e8-b8. 23 ♖b7 is the most obvious challenge (23 ♘e2 ♕a6!? as 24 ♕xc6 is met by 24...♕xe2 25 ♕xd6 ♕xf2+! or 23...♖a2 24 ♖b2 ♖xb2 25 ♕xb2 ♖b8 seem fine for Black) and now 23...♖b8 (23...♕a6!?) 24 ♖xb8 ♗xb8. Here the pawn grab 25 ♘b1 ♖a2 26 ♕xc6 is extremely risky due to 26...♘e4! as 27 ♖f1 (27 ♘c3 ♘xc3 28 ♖xc3 ♕b6!! 29 ♘e5 [29 g3 ♕b2!] 29...♖a1+ 30 ♔h2 ♕xc6 31 ♖xc6 f6! 32 ♖b6 ♗c7 33 ♖c6 ♖a7! wins) 29...♖b2! looks very constricted for White. Alternatively, 26 ♕b3 ♗d6 27 ♖xc6 ♘e4 28 ♖c2 ♖a1 29 g3 ♘g5! is also very awkward for White.

It is clear that in general the black bishop belongs on the active d6-square and Black should always seriously consider the possibility of placing it there. In the game, Black started to lose the thread a little.

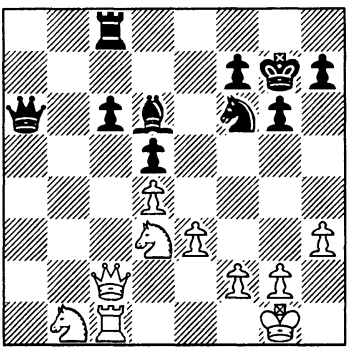
22...♗b4

A rather routine attack on a knight which wishes to move anyway.

23 ♖b3

23 ♘e2! was better according to Ruban, when 23...♖a2 24 ♖b2 ♖xb2 25 ♕xb2 ♗a3 26 ♕a2 leads nowhere for Black.

23...♖c8 24 ♖xa3 ♕xa3 25 ♘b1 ♕a6 26 ♘e5! ♗d6 27 ♘d3



White has an unpleasant grip on the position: he has neutralised Black's a-file play and now has the ...c6-c5 break under wraps as well. It is a slight but very persistent advantage.

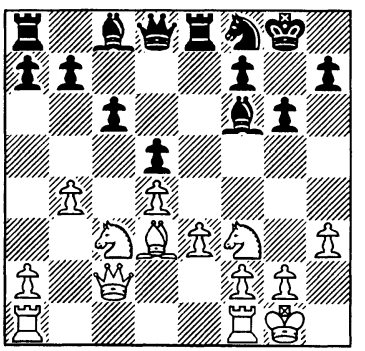
27...♘d7 28 ♘c3 ♘f6 29 ♘a4 h5 30 ♘ac5 ♗xc5 31 ♘xc5 ♕a7 32 ♕d1 ♕e7 33 ♕a4 ♘e4 34 ♕a6 ♘d6 35 ♘d3 ♕b7 36 ♕xb7 ♘xb7 37 ♘b4 c5 38 dxc5 ♖xc5 39 ♖xc5 ♘xc5 40 ♘xd5 h4 41 f4 ♘e4 42 ♔f1 f5 43 ♔e2 g5 44 fxg5 ♔g6 45 ♘f4+ ♔xg5 46 ♘e6+ ♔f6 47 ♘d4 ♘c3+ 48 ♔d3 ♘d5 49 ♘f3 f4 50 e4

♘b4+ 51 ♔c3 ♘c6 52 ♔c4 ♔e6 53 ♘d4+! ♔e5 54 ♘xc6+ ♔xe4 55 ♘d4 ♔e3 56 ♘f3! ♔f2 57 ♘xh4 ♔g3 58 ♔d4 ♔xh4 59 ♔e4 1-0

Game 63
P.Nikolic-L.Hansen
Wijk aan Zee 1995

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♘bd7 5 ♗g5 c6 6 cxd5 exd5 7 e3 ♗e7 8 ♕c2 0-0 9 ♗d3 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♘f8 11 h3 g6 12 ♗xf6!? ♗xf6 13 b4

With this idea, White tries to avoid spending a tempo on ♖a1-b1 as well as removing the need to retreat the bishop once Black attacks it with ...♘f8-e6.

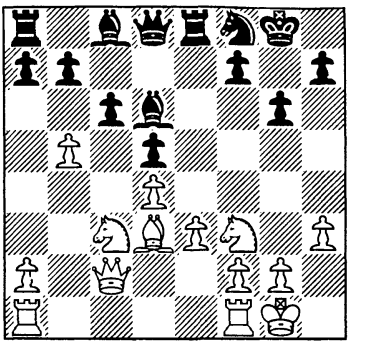


13...♗e7!?

This idea again! As well as supporting kingside play from d6, the bishop of course also helps to cover the c5-square. An interesting idea of Ehlvest's is 13...b6!? followed by ...♗c8-b7 and ...♘f8-e6, going for a Tartakower set-up. Against Karpov in Vienna 1996 he preferred 13...a6 14 a4 (14 ♘a4!?) 14...♗e6 15 b5 (15 ♖fc1 b5!? is suggested by Karpov) 15...axb5 16 axb5 ♘d7 17 bxc6 bxc6 18 ♘e2 c5 19 ♗b5 with a very small edge for White.

14 b5 ♗d6!

see following diagram



15 bxc6 bxc6 16 ♖fc1 ♘e6 17 ♕d1! ♕f6 18 ♖ab1 ♖e7

Hansen suggests the more direct 18...♔g7!?, intending ...h7-h6 and ...♘e6-g5 with dangerous kingside play. The text is also fine however.

19 ♖b3 ♔g7 20 ♘a4 ♗d7 21 ♗a6 ♖ae8 22 ♖b7 ♘g5! 23 ♘xg5 ♕xg5 24 ♔h1 ♖xe3! 25 ♖xd7! ♕f4 26 ♖xd6 ♕xf2! 27 ♘c5! ♖e1+ 28 ♕xe1 ♖xe1+ 29 ♖xe1 ♕xe1+ 30 ♔h2 ♕f2 31 ♖xc6 ♕xd4 32 a4 h5 33 ♗b5 ♕e5+ 34 ♔h1 ♕e1+ 35 ♔h2 ♕e5+ 36 ♔h1 ♕e1+ 37 ♔h2 g5! 38 ♘d3 ♕e3 39 ♖c2 g4 40 g3 h4 41 hxg4 ♕xg3+ 42 ♔h1 h3 43 ♖h2 a6 44 ♗xa6 ♕f3+ 45 ♔g1 ♕g3+ 46 ♔h1 ♕f3+ 47 ♔g1 ♕d1+ 48 ♔f2 ♕xa4 49 ♖xh3 ♕xa6 50 ♖f3! ♕a7+ 51 ♔g2 ♕a2+ 52 ♘f2 ♔f8 53 ♖e3 d4 54 ♖d3 ♕d5+ 55 ♖f3 ♔e7 56 ♔g3 ♔e6 57 ♘d3 ♕c4 58 ♔g2 ♕c2+ 59 ♘f2 ♕e2 60 ♖f4 ♕b2 61 ♖f3 ♕b7 62 ♔g3 ♕c7+ 63 ♔g2 ♔d5 64 ♖f5+ ♔c4 65 ♖f3 ♕c6 66 ♔g3 ♕g6 67 ♔h3! f6 68 ♔h2! ♕h6+ 69 ♔g2 ♕g5 70 ♔g3 ♕e5+ 71 ♔g2 ♕d5 72 ♔g3 ♕e5+ ½-½

Game 64
Karpov-Campora
San Nicolas (match) 1994

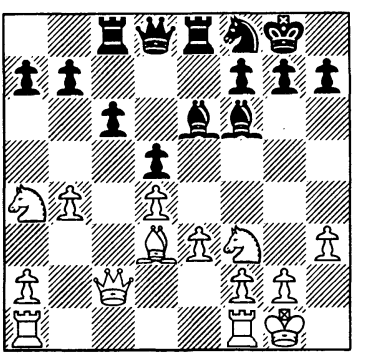
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♗d3 ♘bd7 8 ♘f3 c6 9 ♕c2 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♘f8 11 h3 ♗e6 12

♗xf6?!

This doesn't really seem to the point in this particular position. 12 ♘e5! is much more active, when 12...♘6d7 13 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 14 f4! f6 15 ♘f3 followed by f4-f5 and g2-g4 seems promising for White. 12 ♗f4!? is also interesting transposing to Game 68 below. It is too late for 12 ♖ab1, however. In Henley-Klovan, Biel 1996, Black won brilliantly after 12...♘e4! (exploiting the loose pawn on a2 after any captures on e4) 13 ♗f4 ♗d6! 14 ♗xd6 ♘xd6 15 ♘a4 ♕f6 16 ♔h2 ♗xh3! 17 ♔xh3 ♕h6+ 18 ♔g3 ♖e4!! 19 ♗xe4 ♘xe4+ 20 ♕xe4 dxe4. Finally, 12 ♖fc1 is seen in Game 72.

12...♗xf6 13 b4 ♖c8 14 ♘a4!?

It is very unusual to see this move when Black has not yet weakened his queenside with ...a7-a6.



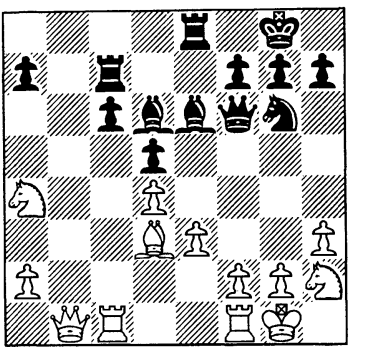
14...♖c7 15 ♖ac1 ♗e7!

Yes, we know what Black is doing!

16 ♕b1 ♗d6 17 b5 ♕f6 18 bxc6 bxc6 19 ♘h2 ♕h4?

Karpov's commentary to the game is rather confusing. As far as I can see, he has played rather badly and stands worse, but he gives little comment until move 22 when he assesses the position as slightly better for White.

To my mind, Black makes a very serious mistake here. By allowing the exchange of light-squared bishops, Black loses all his hopes of kingside pressure and thus his position does not make too much sense after that. Instead, 19...♘g6! was called for



just looking for ...♘g6-h4 even at the cost of the h7-pawn. After 20 ♔h1 (20 ♘c5 ♗c8 21 ♘a6 ♖ce7 22 ♘b4 ♖b7! wins) 20...♘h4! 21 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 22 ♗d3, then 22...♗xh3 23 gxh3 ♗xh2 24 ♔xh2 ♕f3 25 ♖g1 ♕xf2+ 26 ♔h1 ♕e3 27 ♗f1 ♕f3+ 28 ♔h2 ♖ce7 is killing for Black.

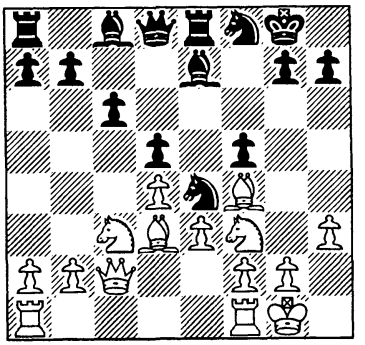
After the text, it is Karpov who has all the fun!

20 ♗f5! ♕h5 21 ♗xe6 ♘xe6 22 ♘f3 f5 23 ♖c3 ♘d8 24 ♘c5 ♗xc5 25 ♖xc5 ♘e6 26 ♖c3 f4 27 e4 h6 28 ♖e1 ♖ce7 29 ♖xc6 dxe4 30 ♖xe4 ♕d5 31 ♖c3 ♕f5 32 ♕e1 ♕d5 33 ♔h1 ♕d6 34 ♕d2 ♘g5 35 ♖xe7 ♕xe7 36 ♕xf4 ♕b4 37 ♘xg5 hxg5 38 ♕d2 g4 39 hxg4 1-0

Game 65
I.Sokolov-Oll
Pula 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 e6 5 ♗g5 ♘bd7 6 cxd5 exd5 7 e3 ♗e7 8 ♕c2 0-0 9 ♗d3 ♖e8 10 h3 ♘f8 11 0-0 ♘e4!? 12 ♗f4! f5!?

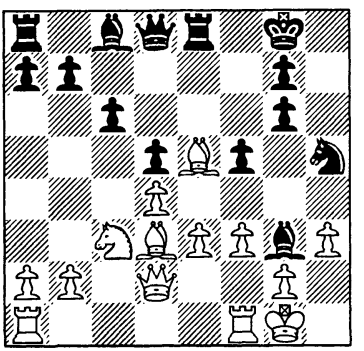
The only consistent follow-up to ...♘f6-e4, though I'm not sure I like it. 12...♘g5 was played in Duric-Pfleger, European Cup 1984, when 13 ♗xg5!? (perhaps 13 ♘xg5 ♗xg5 14 ♗h2!?) 13...♗xg5 14 b4! ♗e7 15 b5 ♗d6 16 bxc6 bxc6 17 ♗f5! was an edge for White.



13 ♘e5 ♘g6 14 ♘xg6

14 f3!? ♘xf4 15 exf4 ♘g3 is suggested as unclear by Sokolov

14...hxg6 15 f3 ♘f6 16 ♕f2 ♘h5 17 ♗e5 ♗h4 18 ♕d2 ♗g3



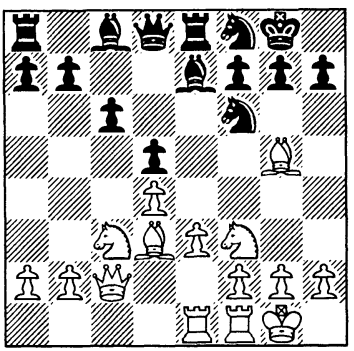
19 ♗xg3

19 f4 would have left White with a slight edge according to Sokolov.

19...♘xg3 20 ♖fe1 ♕d6 21 ♖ab1 ♗d7 22 b4 b5 23 a4 a6 24 ♗c2 ♖e7 25 axb5 axb5 26 e4 dxe4 27 fxe4 ♖ae8! 28 ♗b3+ ♔h7 29 ♕f2 fxe4 30 ♖e3 ♘f5 31 g4 ♘h6 32 ♖d1 ♕xb4 33 ♗c2 ♖f7 34 ♕e2 ♖f3 35 ♘xe4 ♖xe3 36 ♕xe3 ♕c4 37 ♕d2 ♕d5 38 ♘g5+ ♔h8 39 ♗xg6 ♖f8 40 ♗c2 c5 41 ♕d3 ♕xd4+ 42 ♕xd4 cxd4 43 ♖xd4 ♖c8 44 ♖xd7 ♖xc2 45 ♖b7 ♖c5 46 ♘e6 ♖e5 47 ♖b8+ ♘g8 48 ♘f8 ♖d5 49 h4 g5 50 ♖b7 ♖d1+ 51 ♔g2 ♘f6 52 ♘g6+ ♔g8 53 hxg5 ♘xg4 54 ♔f3 ♖d4 55 ♖xb5 ♖a4 56 ♘f4 ♘h2+ 57 ♔g3 ♘f1+ 58 ♔g4 ♘e3+ 59 ♔f3 ♘c2 60 ♖b8+ ♔g7 61 ♖b7+ ♔g8 62 ♘d5 ♘d4+ 63 ♔f2 ♖a5 64 ♖d7 ♘e6 65 g6 ♖xd5 66 ♖xd5 ♔g7 67 ♖d6 ♘f4 68 ♔e3 ♘xg6 69 ♔e4 ♔f7 70 ♖a6 ♘e7 71 ♔e5 ♘g6+ 72 ♔d6 ♘f8 73 ♖a1 ♔f6 74 ♖f1+ ½-½

Game 66
Yusupov-Kramnik
Vienna 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 ♗g5 ♘bd7 6 cxd5 exd5 7 e3 ♗e7 8 ♕c2 0-0 9 ♗d3 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♘f8 11 ♖ae1



Question 43. What is White's idea with this move?

Answer 43. With 11 ♖ae1, White puts to one side any thoughts of queenside expansion and looks instead to exploit his central and kingside chances. Thus, by protecting the e3-pawn, White intends 12 ♘e5 as 12...♘g4 can then be met by 13 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 14 f4! Moreover, in certain cases, White is ready to break in the centre with e3-e4.

11...♘e4! 12 ♗xe7

Question 44. Why not the standard 12 ♗f4 here – it's never easy for Black to maintain his knight on e4, is it?

Answer 44. Here, the position of the queen's rook on e1 causes a few problems. After 12...♗f5! (12...♘g5 13 ♘xg5 ♗xg5 14

♗xg5 ♕xg5 15 f4! ♕f6 16 f5! ♗d7 17 ♕f2 ♖ad8 18 e4! gave White good chances in Kalinichenko-Volynsky, correspondence 1986, whereas 12...♗b4 is considered dubious by Ivan Sokolov who stood worse against Hjartarson in Reykjavik 1988 after 13 h3 ♘g6 14 ♗h2 ♘h4?! [Sokolov suggests 14...f5!? 15 ♘d2 ♗d6] 15 ♘xh4 ♕xh4 16 f3) 13 ♗xe4 ♗xe4! 14 ♘xe4 dxe4 15 ♘d2 ♗b4 16 ♖d1 ♗xd2 17 ♖xd2 ♕d5! the game was equal in Sapis-Maciejewski, Poland 1991.

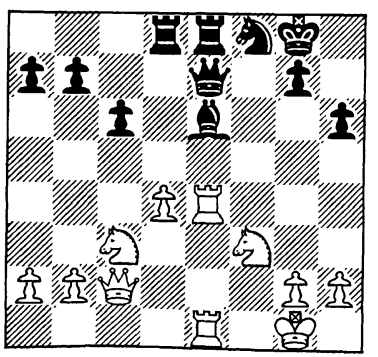
12...♕xe7 13 ♗xe4 dxe4 14 ♘d2 f5

The tricky 14...b6!? has also been tried, aiming for ...♗c8-a6 to trap the white rook on f1. After 15 ♕a4 (15 ♕xe4 ♗a6 16 ♕xe7 ♖xe7 17 ♘e2 ♖ad8 18 b3 ♗xe2 19 ♖xe2 ♖xd4 was equal in Netusil-Kacirek, Prague 1993) 15...a5!? 16 ♕xc6 ♗b7 (16...♗a6 17 ♘d5! followed by ♘d5-c7) 17 ♕xb6 ♗a6 18 ♘dxe4 ♗xf1 19 ♖xf1 ♕b4 20 ♘d5 ♕xb6 21 ♘xb6 ♖a6 22 ♘d6 ♖e6 the game Arencibia-Garcia, Cuba 1995, was agreed drawn in. 23 ♘bc4 ♖axd6 24 ♘xd6 ♖xd6 25 ♖c1 is a very murky ending according to Ftacnik.

15 f3 exf3 16 ♘xf3 ♗e6 17 e4 fxe4 18 ♖xe4 h6

18...♖ad8 19 ♘e2!? (19 ♖fe1) 19...♕d6 20 ♘g3 ♘g6 21 ♖fe1 ♕d5 22 ♕a4 a5 23 b4 axb4 24 ♕xb4 ♕d7 was fairly equal in Timman-Drazic, Koge 1997.

19 ♖fe1 ♖ad8



Question 45. What is this position?

Answer 45. This is a strange one: White has the concrete structural weakness - the IQP - and no obvious sign of an attack to compensate. Black has not fully equalised, however, due to the annoying pressure along the e-file which tends to paralyse Black's pieces.

20 h3!?

20 ♖1e3 was played in Rausis-Viglundsson, Reykjavik 1997, and after 20...♖d6 (20...♕f7 21 ♘e5 ♕f5 22 ♖f3 ♕h7 23 ♕e2 gives White the initiative according to Rausis) 21 ♘e2?! (21 ♕e2 maintains White's pull according to Rausis) 21...♕f7 22 ♕c5 ♖ed8! 23 ♕xa7 ♘g6 Black had good counterplay due to the offside queen on a7 according to Rausis.

20...♕d6

20...♕f7 21 ♘e5 ♕f5 22 ♖f1 is more pleasant for White according to Yusupov.

21 ♖1e3 ♗f7

21...♖e7, keeping things tight, was better than this slightly panicky attempt for counterplay according to Yusupov.

22 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 23 ♖xe8 ♗xe8 24 ♕b3+ ♔h7 25 ♕xb7 ♗h5 26 ♘e4 ♕f4 27 ♕xc6

27 ♘ed2 ♗xf3 28 ♘xf3 ♕c1+ 29 ♔h2 ♘e6 30 ♕d7 would have left White clearly better according to Yusupov.

27...♗xf3 28 gxf3 ♘g6 29 ♘f2 ♕xd4 30 ♕c2 ♕d5 31 f4 ♕f3! 32 f5 ♘f4 33 f6+ ♔g8 34 ♕c4+ ♔h7 35 ♕c2+ ♔g8 36 ♕c4+ ♔h7 ½-½

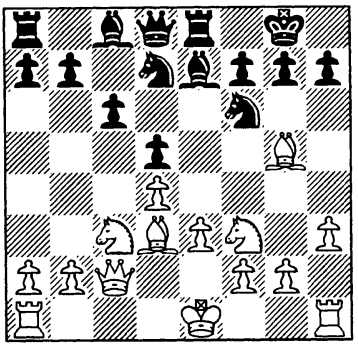
In general therefore, the variation with 10 0-0 ♘f8 and then 11 h3 seems like a small edge for White, though it is not too terrifying for Black. We now turn to the lines with **10 h3.**

see following diagram

Question 45. I don't understand. What's the difference if Black plays 10...♘f8?

Answer 45. Apart from castling kingside, which we have already looked at, White has two extra possibilities: 11 ♗f4 (Games 67

and 68) and 11 0-0-0 (Game 69).



Question 46. What is the idea behind this 11 ♗f4 move?

Answer 46. On the downside, White loses a tempo and abandons all his pressure on the h7-pawn as there are now no longer any ♗g5xf6 followed by ♗d3xh7+ possibilities. However, there are two main points to this move, which was a favourite of Reshevsky's:

1. It prevents Black from playing ...♘f6-e4 by removing the tactical basis for this manoeuvre. Black is consequently prevented from making use of his central outpost, at least for the time being.

2. It supports a future ♘f3-e5, using White's own central outpost. It is therefore very much a central plan in conception.

Game 67
Krivoseja-Klovan
Germany 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♗d3 0-0 8 ♕c2 ♖e8 9 ♘f3 ♘f8 10 h3 c6

A word must be said here about Black's move order, which is very precise indeed.

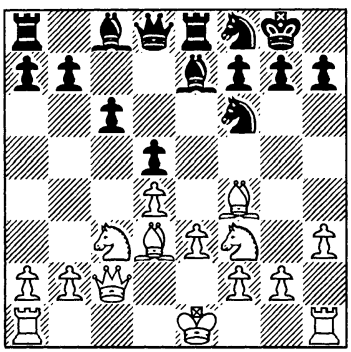
Question 47. What do you mean?

Answer 47. As you can see, Black delayed playing ...c7-c6 until White had played 10 h3.

Question 48. Why was that?

Answer 48. A common idea for all the hackers out there is to castle queenside in these positions. By delaying ...c7-c6, Black ensures that if his opponent tries to castle queenside very quickly – for example on move 10 – then Black can try to open the c-file with ...c7-c5 in one move rather than wasting a tempo with ...c7-c6-c5. For example, in Korchnoi–Yusupov, Dortmund 1994, Black transposed to a position where he had played 9...c6 rather than 9...♘f8 and after 10 0-0-0 ♘f8 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 h3!? ♗e6 13 ♔b1 ♖c8 14 g4, Yusupov states that 14...c5 would have given Black reasonable counterplay. How much better then if Black plays 9...♘f8, so that after 10 0-0-0 he plays 10...♗e6 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 h3 ♖c8! followed by ...c7-c5.

11 ♗f4



11...♗d6

Black uses the opportunity to exchange the dark-squared bishops, even though he cannot use the e4-outpost for his knight.

Question 49. Can't Black gain a tempo first with 11...♘g6 12 ♗h2 and then play 12...♗d6?

Answer 49. This is a reasonable question. As Reshevsky points out, the problem is that the knight does not have a great deal to do on g6, while it may just prove a target for White's on-rushing kingside pawns after 13 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 14 0-0-0 ♗e6 15 g4!? However, after 15...♖ac8 16 g5 ♘d7 17 h4? ♗g4 18 ♗e2 ♘f4! 19 ♘g1 ♘xe2+ 20 ♘gxe2 c5 21 ♔b1 b5! White was in big trouble in

Krivoseja-Asrian, Minsk 1998. Krivoseja suggests that 15 ♔b1 ♖ac8 16 ♖c1 consolidating first would have been slightly better for White.

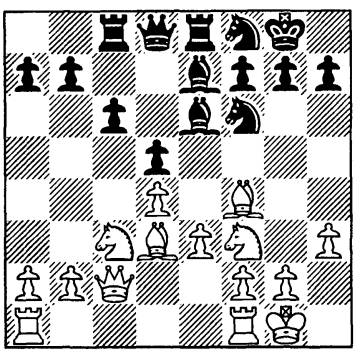
12 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 13 0-0 ♗e6 14 ♖ab1 a5 15 ♖fc1 ♘8d7 16 a3 h6 17 ♘a4 ♘e4 18 ♘d2

18 ♗xe4 dxe4 19 ♘d2 ♗d5 20 ♘c5 is a touch better for White according to Krivoseja. The text allows rapid liquidation.

18...♗f5 19 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 20 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 21 ♕d1 ♕g6 22 ♕f1 ½-½

Game 68
Krasenkov-Yusupov
Pula 1997

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♘bd7 5 ♗g5 c6 6 cxd5 exd5 7 e3 ♗e7 8 ♕c2 0-0 9 ♗d3 ♖e8 10 h3 ♘f8 11 ♗f4 ♗e6!? 12 0-0 ♖c8



A very calm and sensible idea, deterring moves like 13 ♘e5 due to 13...c5 (Krasenkov) and just developing the queenside before taking any further action. The alternative 12...♘6d7 is seen in Game 71.

13 ♘a4 ♗d6 14 ♘e5 ♖c7!

A typical idea to cover the c7-square whilst allowing the bishop on e6 to drop back to c8, enabling the rook on e8 to support a later ...♘f6-e4.

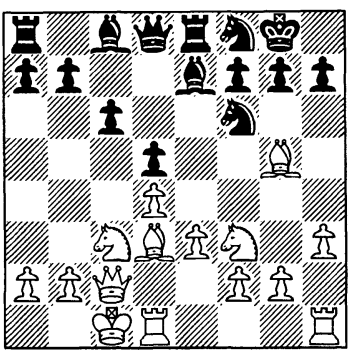
15 ♖ab1 ♘g6

Yusupov suggests the immediate 15...♗c8!? with the twin ideas of ...c6-c5 and ...♘f8-g6 as equal.

16 ♗h2 ♗c8 17 ♕c3 ♘e4 18 ♗xe4 dxe4 19 ♘c5 ♘xe5 20 dxe5 ♗xc5 21 ♕xc5 ♗e6 22 ♖bd1 ♖d7 23 ♖d6 ♕b6 24 ♕a3 a5 25 ♖fd1 ♖xd6 26 exd6 ♕b4 27 ♕xb4 ½-½

Game 69
Anastasian-Lputian
Yerevan 1996

1 c4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 e6 3 d4 d5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♘f3 0-0 8 ♗d3 ♖e8 9 ♕c2 ♘f8 10 h3 c6 11 0-0-0



Now that Black has played ...c7-c6, White feels that he can castle queenside. However, whereas White has played a rather quiet move - 11 h3 - Black has made an extra developing move ...♘d7-f8.

11...a5!? 12 ♔b1 a4! 13 ♘xa4 ♕a5 14 b3

This weakens the queenside, but 14 ♘c3 ♗e6 followed by ...b7-b5 and ...♘f6-e4 is also dangerous.

14...b5 15 ♘c5 ♗xc5 16 ♗xf6

16 dxc5 was better, when 16...♘8d7 is unclear according to Lputian. After the game continuation, Black rapidly gains the upper hand.

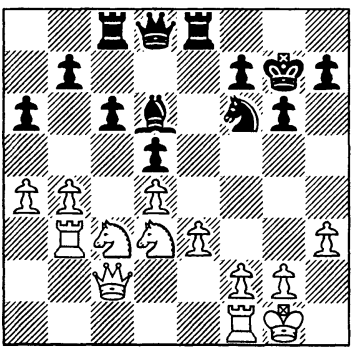
16...♗b4 17 ♗h4 ♖e6 18 ♖he1 ♗xe1 19 ♖xe1 b4 20 ♖c1 ♗a6 21 ♘e1 c5 22

dxc5 ♘d7 23 ♗xa6 ♖exa6 24 ♘d3 ♕b5 25 a4 bxa3 26 c6 ♘f8 27 ♗e7 ♘e6 28 ♔a2 ♖6a7 29 ♗d6 ♖d8 30 ♗g3 ♖c8 31 ♕c3 h5 32 ♘f4 ♘d8 33 ♕c5 ♕xc5 34 ♖xc5 ♘xc6 35 ♔a1 ♖a5 36 ♖xd5 ♘b4 37 ♖d1 h4 38 ♗h2 ♖c2 0-1

We shall now conclude with a selection of 'classic' minority attack games. Although their theoretical relevancy may vary, each of them illustrates a certain approach or important strategical theme, whether it is in the notes or played in the game itself.

Game 70
Gelfand-Ivanchuk
Linares 1993

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♘bd7 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗g5 ♗e7 7 e3 0-0 8 ♗d3 ♖e8 9 ♕c2 ♘f8 10 0-0 c6 11 h3 g6 12 ♖ab1 ♘e6 13 ♗h6 ♘g7 14 b4 a6 15 a4 ♗f5! 16 ♘e5 ♖c8 17 ♗xg7 ♗xd3 18 ♘xd3 ♔xg7 19 ♖b3 ♗d6!

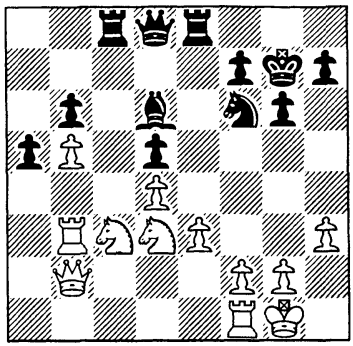


Black has achieved a nice set-up for his pieces: the bishop is well-placed on d6, preventing the knight from returning to e5, while the rook on c8 annoys the queen when the c-file is opened.

20 b5?

20 ♕b2 ♔g8! 21 b5 axb5! (21...cxb5?! 22 axb5 a5 23 b6! is good for White according to Ivanchuk) 22 axb5 c5! with an equal position according to Ivanchuk.

20...cxb5! 21 axb5 a5! 22 ♕b2 b6!

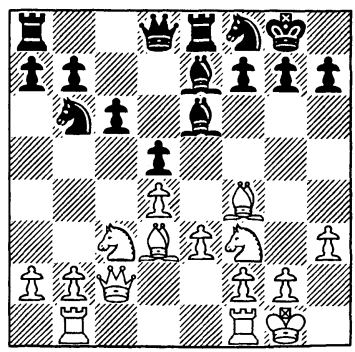


Now b5-b6 is prevented and White's pieces have no real targets, as he cannot get at the black d-pawn. Black stands clearly better.

23 ♘a4 ♖c4 24 ♖a1 ♘e4 25 f3 ♘g3 26 ♘e5 ♗xe5 27 dxe5 ♕c7 28 ♔h2 ♘f5 29 f4 ♖c2 30 ♖c3 ♖xc3 31 ♕xc3 ♕xc3 32 ♘xc3 ♘xe3 33 ♘a4 d4 34 ♖a3 ♘c4 35 ♖d3 ♖d8 36 ♔g3 ♖d5 37 ♔f2 g5 38 g3 ♔g6 0-1

Game 71
Beliavsky-Ivanchuk
Linares 1993

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♘bd7 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗g5 ♗e7 7 e3 c6 8 ♕c2 0-0 9 ♗d3 ♖e8 10 h3 ♘f8 11 ♗f4 ♗e6!? 12 0-0 ♘6d7 13 ♖ab1 ♘b6



Black transfers his knight to b6 in order to eye the c4-square that will be weakened when White plays b2-b4.

14 b4 ♗d6 15 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 16 a4 a6 17 ♘d2! ♖e7 18 ♘b3!

A typical manoeuvre, though with an unusual knight. Once Black has put his pawn to a6, a white knight is almost always very well placed on c5.

18...♖c7

18...♕xb4 19 ♘c5 ♕a5 20 ♖b3 followed by ♖f1-b1 would net the b-pawn according to Beliavsky.

19 ♘c5 ♘bd7 20 f4! f6 21 f5!

Another typical idea to gain space on the kingside and squeeze Black on all fronts.

21...♗f7 22 ♕f2?

A bad mistake according to Beliavsky. 22 a5! would have left White in complete control.

22...a5 23 ♘xd7 ♖xd7 24 bxa5 ♖xa5 25 ♖b6 ♕a3 26 ♖fb1 ♖a8 27 ♖6b3 ♕e7 28 ♕f4 ♖e8 29 ♔f2 g5 30 ♕f3 h5 31 a5 h4 32 ♘a4 ♕d8 33 ♘c5 ♖de7 34 ♘xb7 ♕c7 35 ♗f1 ♔g7 36 ♔g1 ♔h6 37 a6 ♗h5 38 ♕f2 ♘d7 39 ♖c1 1-0

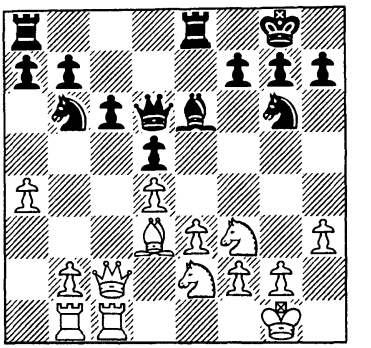
Game 72
Karpov-Kharitonov
USSR Championship 1988

1 c4 e6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 d4 ♘f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 e3 ♘bd7 7 ♘f3 c6 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 ♕c2 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♘f8 11 h3 ♗e6 12 ♖fc1!?

A typical Karpov move: it will always be useful, but it is hard to say whether it is the most accurate choice at this juncture. All you know is that Karpov will make you suffer whatever the theoretical conclusion!

12...♘6d7 13 ♗f4 ♘b6 14 ♖ab1 ♗d6 15 ♘e2 ♘g6 16 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 17 a4!

Karpov didn't want to allow a knight to c4 after 17 b4, and thus delays the advance of the b-pawn in order to always have b2-b3 to chase away the knight.



17...♖ac8 18 ♕c5 ♕b8

18...♕xc5?! 19 dxc5 ♘d7 20 b4 ♘ge5 21 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 22 ♗c2 is clearly better for White according to Karpov.

19 ♕a3

Looking for a5-a6.

19...a6 20 ♖c3 ♕c7 21 ♖bc1 ♖a8 22 ♘d2

Now that he has covered the c4-square, White is ready to play b2-b4.

22...a5 23 ♖b1 ♘c8 24 b4 axb4 25 ♕xb4 ♘d6 26 ♘b3 ♗c8 27 a5 ♘e7 28 ♘g3 g6 29 ♖cc1 h5?

29...♘ef5 30 ♘xf5 ♗xf5 31 ♗xf5 ♘xf5 32 ♘c5 ♖eb8 was still tenable according to Karpov.

30 ♖a1 h4 31 ♘f1 ♗f5 32 ♗e2! ♘e4 33 ♘c5 ♘xc5 34 ♕xc5 ♗e6 35 ♘d2 ♘f5 36 ♘f3 ♕d8 37 a6! bxa6 38 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 39 ♗xa6 ♕a8 40 ♕xc6 ♕xc6 41 ♖xc6 ♖a8 42 ♗d3 1-0

Game 73
Andersson-Kasparov
Belgrade (match) 1985

Though this game is not remarkable in itself, Kasparov's comments are extremely instructive.

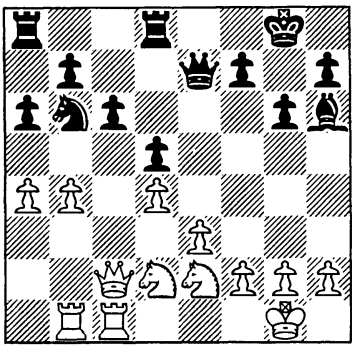
1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 c6 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗g5 ♗e7 7 ♕c2 g6 8 e3 ♗f5 9 ♗d3 ♗xd3 10 ♕xd3 0-0

10...♘bd7 is seen in the next main game.

11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 b4 ♕d6 13 ♖b1 ♘d7 14 0-0 ♖fd8 15 ♖fc1

15 b5 is met by 15...c5! while 15 ♘a4 b5! 16 ♘c5 ♘xc5 17 bxc5 ♕e6 18 a4 a6 is unclear according to Kasparov.

15...♘b6 16 ♘d2 ♕e7 17 ♕c2 a6 18 a4 ♗g7 19 ♘e2 ♗h6!

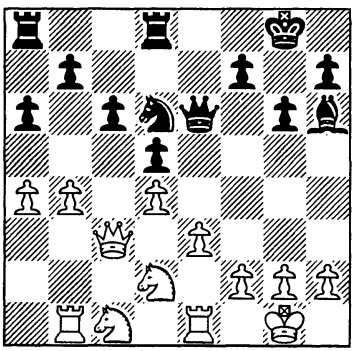


Preventing White from re-routing his knight to d3 via f4.

20 ♖e1

20 b5 cxb5! 21 axb5 ♖dc8 22 ♕b2 a5 is unclear according to Kasparov.

20...♕e6 21 ♘c1 ♘c4! 22 ♕c3 ♘d6!



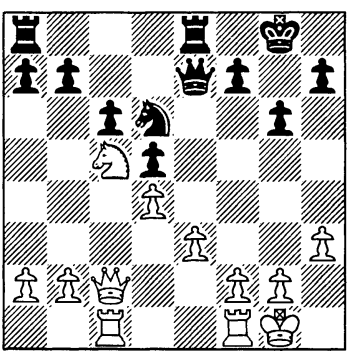
The knight is very comfortably placed here, defending b7 and preventing b4-b5 while eyeing the e4 and c4 outposts.

23 ♘d3 ♗g7 24 ♘c5 ♕e7 25 ♖e2 ♖e8 26 ♖be1 ♕c7 27 a5 ♖e7 28 ♕d3 ♖ae8 29 f3 ♘f5 30 g3 h5 31 ♔g2 ♕c8 32 ♘db3 ♖d8 33 ♖d1 ♗f6 34 ♕c3 ♗g7 35 e4 dxe4 36 fxe4 h4 37 g4 ♘xd4 38 ♘xd4 ♕xg4+ 39 ♔f1 ♖d6 40 ♖d3 ♕f4+ 41 ♖f2 ♕e5 42 ♖fd2 ♕f4+ 43 ♖f2 ♕e5 44 ♖fd2 ½-½

Game 74
Bobotsov-T.Petrosian
Lugano Olympiad 1968

This is a beautiful example of exploiting passive play by White.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♘c3 c6 6 ♗g5 ♗e7 7 ♕c2 g6 8 e3 ♗f5 9 ♗d3 ♗xd3 10 ♕xd3 ♘bd7 11 ♗h6 ♘g4 12 ♗f4 0-0 13 0-0 ♖e8 14 h3 ♘gf6 15 ♘e5 ♘b6 16 ♗g5 ♘e4 17 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 18 ♕c2 ♘d6 19 ♘a4 ♘bc4 20 ♘xc4 ♘xc4 21 ♘c5 ♘d6 22 ♖ac1



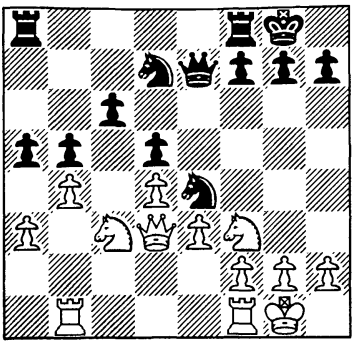
Now Black starts to get going.

22...♕g5 23 ♕d1 h5 24 ♔h1 ♖e7 25 ♘d3 ♘e4 26 ♘c5 ♘d6 27 ♘d3 ♕f5 28 ♘e5 f6 29 ♘f3 ♖g7 30 ♘h2 ♖e8 31 ♔g1 ♘e4 32 ♕f3 ♕e6 33 ♖fd1 g5 34 ♕xh5 f5 35 ♖e1 g4 36 hxg4 fxg4 37 f3 gxf3 38 ♘xf3 ♖h7 39 ♕e5 ♕c8 40 ♕f4 ♖f8 41 ♕e5 ♖f5 0-1

Game 75
P.Nikolic-Kramnik
Amber (blindfold) 1998

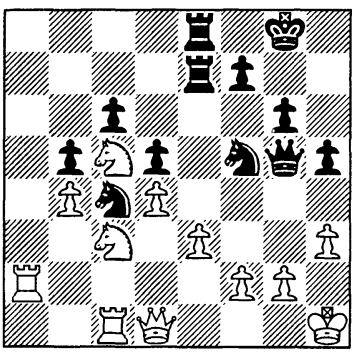
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 c6 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗g5 ♗e7 7 e3 ♗f5 8 ♗d3

♗xd3 9 ♕xd3 ♘bd7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖ab1 a5 12 a3 ♘e4 13 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 14 b4 b5!



White's knight cannot get to e5 to attack c6, and Black's knights are heading for c4!

15 ♕c2 axb4 16 axb4 ♘d6 17 ♖b3 ♘b6 18 ♘e5 ♖fc8 19 ♘d3 ♘bc4 20 ♘c5 ♖e8 21 h3 g6 22 ♖c1 ♖a7 23 ♕d1 h5 24 ♔h1 ♕g5 25 ♖bb1 ♖ae7 26 ♖a1 ♘f5 27 ♖a2

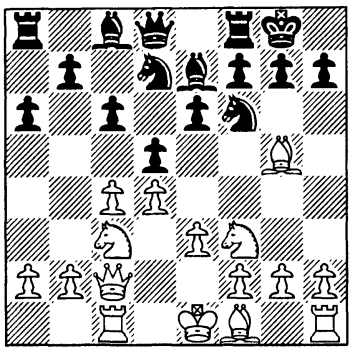


27...♘cxe3 28 fxe3 ♖xe3 29 ♖f2 ♕h4 30 ♕d2 ♘xd4 31 ♖cf1 ♘f5 32 ♖xf5 gxf5 33 ♘d1 ♖e1 34 ♔g1 ♖8e2 35 ♕c3 ♖xd1 0-1

Game 76
Rubinstein-Takacs
Budapest 1926

1 c4 ♘f6 2 d4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♗g5 ♘bd7 5 e3 ♗e7 6 ♘f3 0-0 7 ♖c1 c6 8 ♕c2 a6

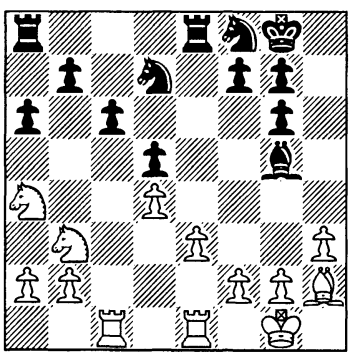
With this flexible system, Black seeks to win the battle for the tempo. In the resulting Exchange variation position, however, Black has already weakened his queenside dark squares. This game is *the* punishment for this 'crime'!



9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♗d3 ♖e8 11 0-0 ♘f8 12 ♖fe1 ♗g4 13 ♘d2 ♘6d7 14 ♗f4 ♗g5 15 h3!

Now 15...♗xf4 16 exf4 ♗e6 17 f5! wins a piece.

15...♗h5 16 ♗h2 ♗g6 17 ♗xg6 hxg6 18 ♕b3 ♕b6 19 ♘a4 ♕xb3 20 ♘xb3!



Not a nice position for Black – the knights are looking for that c5-square, or even...

20...♘e6 21 ♘a5!

Just sit back and enjoy the rest.

21...♖a7 22 ♔f1 ♗d8 23 b4 f5 24 ♘b2 g5 25 ♘d3 ♔f7 26 ♖c2 ♗b6 27 ♗d6 ♘d8 28 ♘c5 ♘xc5 29 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 30

bxc5 ♔e7 31 ♖b2 ♔d7 32 ♖eb1 ♔c8 33 ♔e2 ♖e7 34 ♔f3 ♖e4 35 g4 g6 36 ♖g1 ♘f7 37 h4 gxh4 38 gxf5 gxf5 39 ♖g7 ♘d8 40 ♖g8 f4 41 ♖h8 fxe3 42 fxe3 ♔d7 43 ♖g2 ♖e8 44 ♖xh4 ♖e7 45 ♖h8 ♔c7 46 ♖gg8 ♖d7 47 ♘b3 a5 48 ♘c1 ♖a8 49 ♘d3 b5 50 cxb6+ ♔xb6 51 ♘c5 ♖d6 52 a4 ♖c8 53 ♔g4 1-0

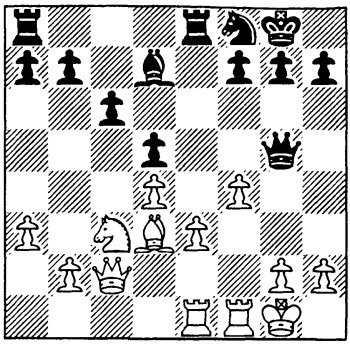
Game 77

T.Petrosian-Beliavsky

USSR Championship 1983

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♗d3 ♘bd7 8 ♘f3 ♖e8 9 0-0 c6 10 ♕c2 ♘f8 11 a3 ♘e4 12 ♗f4 ♘g5 13 ♘xg5 ♗xg5 14 ♗xg5 ♕xg5 15 ♖ae1! ♗d7 16 f4!

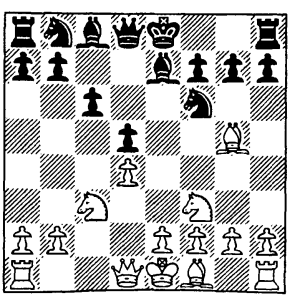
We have often seen this plan. As Black's knight is a long way from e4, White advances his pawn to f5, restricting Black's light-squared bishop, and then breaks with e3-e4.



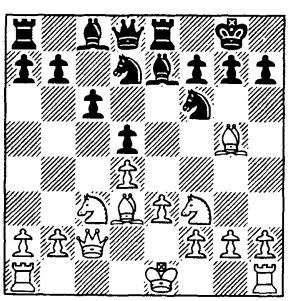
16...♕h6 17 ♕f2 ♖e7 18 f5 g6 19 e4 dxe4 20 ♘xe4 gxf5 21 ♕g3+ ♔h8 22 ♘d6 f4 23 ♖xe7 ♕xd6 24 ♖xd7 ♕xd7 25 ♕xf4 ♖d8 26 ♕f6+ ♔g8 27 ♔h1 ♕xd4 28 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 29 ♕e7 ♘g6 30 ♗xg6 hxg6 31 h3 b5 32 ♖f6 ♖g8 33 ♖xc6 ♖g7 34 ♕g5 ♔h7 35 ♔h2 b4 36 ♖f6 bxa3 37 bxa3 ♕c4 38 ♖f4 ♕c7 39 ♕h4+ ♔g8 40 ♕g3 a5 41 a4 ♕b6 1-0

Summary
Try to really understand the ideas in this chapter – they will serve you well in all your games in this opening. The key idea for Black in many structures is to place the dark-squared bishop on the b8-h2 diagonal in order to put pressure on White's kingside, while at the same time defending his weak queenside dark squares.

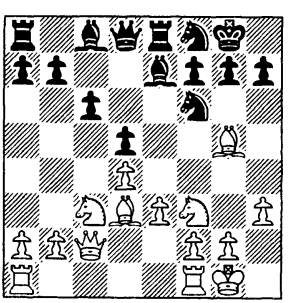
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 cxd5
4 ♘f3 ♗e7
5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗g5 c6 *(D)*
7 ♕c2 g6
8 e4 – *Game 58*
8 e3 ♗f5 9 ♗d3 ♗xd3 10 ♕xd3
10...0-0 – *Game 73*; 10...♘bd7 – *Game 74*
7 e3 – *Game 75*
5 ♗g5
5...h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 cxd5 – *Game 59*; 5...♗e7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♖c1 – *Game 76*
4...exd5 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 e3 c6 7 ♗d3 ♘bd7 8 ♘f3 0-0 9 ♕c2 ♖e8 *(D)* **10 0-0**
10 h3 ♘f8
11 ♗f4
11...♗d6 – *Game 67*
11...♗e6 12 0-0: 12...♖c8 – *Game 68*; 12...♘6d7 – *Game 71*
11 0-0-0 – *Game 69*
10...♘f8 11 ♖ab1
11 h3 *(D)*
11...g6
12 ♖ab1 ♘e6 13 ♗h6 ♘g7 14 b4 a6 15 a4 ♗f5
16 ♗xg7 – *Game 62*; 16 ♘e5 – *Game 70*
12 ♗xf6 – *Game 63*
11...♗e6: 12 ♗xf6 – *Game 64*; 12 ♖fc1 – *Game 72*
11...♘e4 – *Game 65*
11 ♖ae1 – *Game 66*; 11 a3 – *Game 77*
11...g6
11...♘g6 – *Game 61*
12 b4 – *Game 60*



6...c6

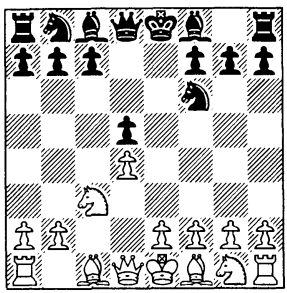


9...♖e8



11 h3

CHAPTER EIGHT



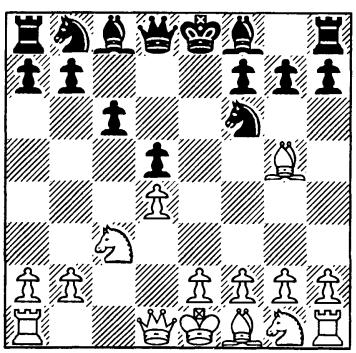
Exchange Variation: Flexible Systems

In this chapter White plays the Exchange variation, but does not commit his king's knight in order to retain the option of placing it on e2. This is Kasparov's favourite scheme of development against the QGD.

These systems arise from two move orders: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 (Games 78-86) and 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7!? 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗f4 (Games 87-91). We shall first examine 3...♘f6.

Game 78
Gulko-Short
match 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 c6!?



Question 1. This looks like a subtle move order!

Answer 1. This is Black's most ambitious continuation and probably the most annoying continuation for White.

Question 2. So what is the point exactly?

Answer 2. Black is still looking to develop his light-squared bishop. 5...♗f5 on the last move would have lost the d5-pawn, so by protecting it Black threatens to put the bishop on f5 next move. White has two reactions - 6 e3 (as in this game and Games 79 and 80) can lead to a complicated ending, while 6 ♕c2 (as in Games 81-86) involves different concessions.

Question 3. Is it bad for White to go into the ending then?

Answer 3. No, but it is a matter of personal taste. Most White players hope for more from the opening than to reach a complicated ending - they want the chance of a quick kill!

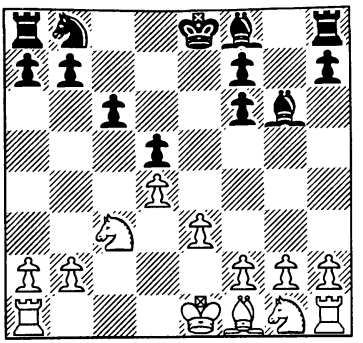
6 e3 ♗f5

The solid but co-operative 6...♗e7 leads to the main line after 7 ♗d3 ♘bd7 8 ♕c2 (see Games 82-86).

7 ♕f3!

This is the only way for White to make anything of his opponent's early ambition.

7...♗g6 8 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 9 ♕xf6 gxf6



Question 4. What's going on?

Answer 4. This position has traditionally been assessed as clearly better for White, but recent games have cast doubt on this. In return for the bishop pair, White inflicts a serious structural weakness on the black position: not only are the f-pawns doubled, but Black also has an isolated h-pawn. You can certainly imagine any Trompowsky player being happy with White's position!

Question 5. But isn't it just bad having a weakness like this in the endgame?

Answer 5. There are two factors in Black's favour: the position is rather closed and Black's weakness is on the wrong side for White. On the queenside, White would have the semi-open c-file to exploit it, but on the kingside, his major pieces struggle to get involved in the action. Clearly, White does not have enough immediate firepower to win one of Black's kingside pawns so he must be more restrained.

Question 6. So what does he attack?

Answer 6. Black's main kingside weaknesses are on the light squares as ...g7-g6 is no longer possible to cover the h5- and f5-squares. Ideally, White wishes to install a knight on f5, cramping Black's kingside, before he thinks about targeting the pawns themselves.

Question 7. So how does Black react?

Answer 7. Black's key idea is to play his queen's knight to d6.

Question 8. Why?

Answer 8. From d6, the knight guards f5 and thus prevents any white piece from installing itself there. It also eyes the e4- and c4-outposts and supports ...f6-f5.

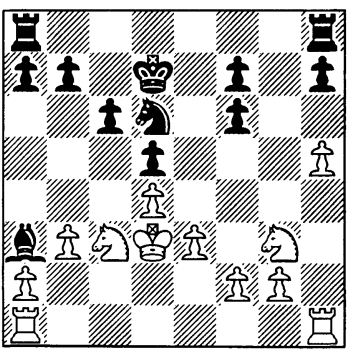
10 ♔d2

Preparing ♗f1-d3 to neutralise the bishop on g6 and to start taking control of the f5-square. 10 ♘f3 is considered in the next game and 10 h4 in Game 80, while White has 10 0-0-0 with a similar idea to the game continuation. This simply led to a draw after 10...♘d7 11 ♗d3 ♗xd3!? 12 ♖xd3 ♖g8 13 g3 ♘d7 14 ♘f3 in Shipov-Khalifman, European Club Cup 1999, but 11 h4, as in Shariyazdanov-Kharlov, Elista 1996, was more aggressive when 11...♘b6 12 h5 ♗f5 13 ♘f3 ♗g4 14 ♗e2 ♗xf3 15 gxf3 h6 16 ♗d3 ♗d6 17 f4 ♘c8 was agreed drawn, though as King points out, 18 ♖hg1 does look a little better for White. King suggests 13...♘c8 14 ♘h4 ♗e6 15 ♗d3 ♘d6 as an improvement.

10...♘d7 11 ♗d3 ♘b6! 12 b3 ♗a3!

Hauchard-Kharlov, Linares 1997, saw a very similar idea, clearly based on the present game: 12...♗b4 13 ♘ge2 ♘c8 14 h4 ♘d6 15 h5 ♗xd3 16 ♔xd3 ♗xc3 17 ♘xc3 ♖g8 18 ♖ag1 f5 19 f3 h6 20 ♔e2 ♔d7 21 ♔f2 ♖g5 22 ♘e2 a5 and a draw was agreed.

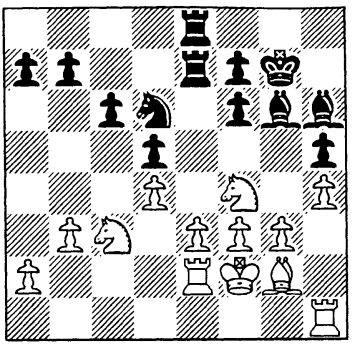
13 ♘ge2 ♔d7 14 ♘g3 ♘c8! 15 h4 ♘d6 16 h5 ♗xd3 17 ♔xd3



Question 9. What is this position?

Answer 9. White has manoeuvred his knight towards the f5-square and forced Black to exchange his light-squared bishop. However, Black's knight on d6 holds everything together, while thanks to the doubled f-pawns, Black can also use the g-file to activate his major pieces.

17...♗b2! 18 ♖ab1 ♗xc3 19 ♔xc3 ♖hg8 20 ♔d3 a5!? 21 a4 f5! 22 ♖h2 ♘e4 23 ♘xe4 fxe4+ 24 ♔e2 f5 25 f3 ♔e6 26 ♖f1 ♖g3 27 fxe4 fxe4 28 ♖f4 ♖ag8 29 ♔f2 h6 ½-½



Game 79
Milov-Pigusov
New York Open 1998

1 c4 e6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 d4 ♘f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 c6 6 e3 ♗f5 7 ♕f3 ♗g6 8 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 9 ♕xf6 gxf6 10 ♘f3!?

White prepares to attack the f5-square from h4. The drawback is that White no longer has the idea of h2-h4-h5.

10...♘d7 11 ♘h4 ♗e7 12 g3

12 f4!? f5 13 ♘f3 ♘b6 14 ♗d3 ♘c8 15 0-0-0 ♘d6 is fine for Black according to Piket.

12...♘b6 13 f3

Piket's suggested improvement over the 13 ♖d1 of Piket-Van der Sterren, Wijk aan Zee 1998, when 13...♗b4 14 a3 ♗xc3+ 15 bxc3 ♘a4 16 ♔d2 b5 17 f3 0-0 18 g4 ♘b2 was very murky. Alternatively, 13 0-0-0, as in Yermolinsky-Azmaiparashvili, Elista Olympiad 1998, led to a draw after 13...♘c8 14 ♗d3 ♘d6 15 f3 ♗xd3 16 ♖xd3 f5 17 ♘g2 ♗g5 18 ♔c2. White seems to cause his opponent more problems by leaving the bishop on g6 than by exchanging it off.

13...0-0 14 ♔f2 ♖fe8 15 ♖d1 ♘c8 16 ♘g2 ♘d6 17 h4 h5 18 ♘f4 ♗f8 19 ♖e1 ♗h6 20 b3 ♔g7 21 ♗g2 ♖e7 22 ♖e2 ♖ae8

White has a small pull, but Black should be able to hold a draw ... though in the game he doesn't!

23 ♖he1 a5 24 e4 dxe4 25 fxe4 ♖d8 26 ♗f3 ♘e8 27 ♖d1 ♖ed7 28 d5 cxd5 29 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 30 ♘cxd5 ♘d6 31 e5 fxe5 32 ♖xe5 a4 33 bxa4 ♖c8 34 ♗xh5 ♗e4 35 ♗d1 ♖c5 36 ♗b3 ♗xf4 37 gxf4 ♖c1 38 ♖g5+ ♔f8 39 ♘f6 ♗c6 40 ♘h7+ ♔e7 41 ♖e5+ ♔d8 42 ♘g5 f6 43 ♖e6 ♘e8 44 ♘f3 ♖h1 45 a5 ♗xf3 46 ♔xf3 ♖xh4 47 ♗a4 ♘c7 48 ♖d6+ ♔c8 49 ♖xf6 ♘d5 50 ♖f8+ ♔c7 51 ♗b3 ♘e7 52 ♖f7 ♔d6 53 ♖f6+ ♔c7 54 a6 bxa6 55 ♖xa6 ♖h1 56 ♖e6 ♘c6 57 ♖e4 ♔d6 58 ♔g4 ♘e7 59 ♖d4+ ♔c6 60 ♖d1 ♖h2 61 ♔g5 ♘c8 62 ♗e6 ♘d6 63 ♖c1+ ♔b5 64 ♔f6 ♖e2 65 f5 ♖f2 66 ♔e5 ♘xf5 1-0

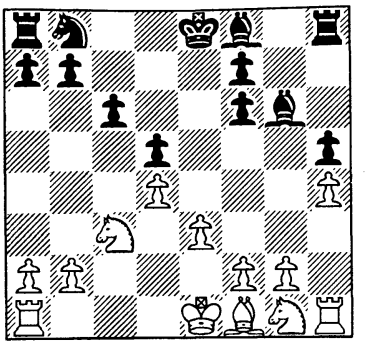
Game 80
I.Sokolov-Dautov
Nussloch 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 c6 6 e3 ♗f5 7 ♕f3 ♗g6 8 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 9 ♕xf6 gxf6 10 h4 h5!?

Question 10. This looks very natural.

Answer 10. In fact it is quite a risky decision for Black because it puts the isolated h-pawn within reach of White's pieces and of his pawns. It also makes the bishop on g6 a lot less stable. Instead 10...♘d7 11 h5 ♗f5 12 ♔d2 (Ivan Sokolov suggests 12 ♘f3, intending ♘f3-h4) 12...♖g8 13 g3 ♗e6 14 ♗d3 f5! 15 ♘ge2 ♘f6 16 ♘f4 ♗d6 17 ♖h3 ♖g5 worked out fine for Black in Agrest-

Nickoloff, Elista Olympiad 1998.



11 ♘h3 ♗d6 12 ♗e2

12 g3 is suggested as an improvement with ♘f4 to follow. After 12...♘d7 13 ♘f4 we have transposed into Drasko-Bellini, Montecatini 1995, which was slightly better for White after 13...♗xf4!? 14 gxf4 ♗f5 15 f3 ♖d8 16 ♔f2 ♘b6 17 ♗e2 ♔e7 18 b4 followed by a2-a4.

12...♘d7 13 ♖c1 ♘b6 14 g3 ♘c4!? 15 ♗xc4 dxc4 16 ♘f4 ♗f5!? 17 f3 0-0-0?

This puts the king too far from the kingside action. Instead 17...b5 was better according to Ivan Sokolov.

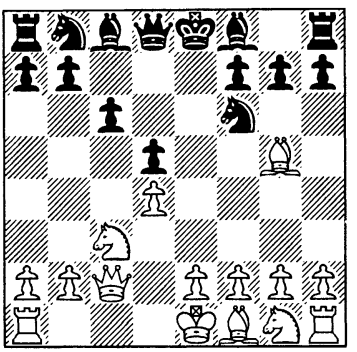
18 ♔f2 b5 19 ♘xh5! ♖xh5 20 g4 ♗xg4 21 fxg4 ♖h6 22 ♘e4 ♔d7 23 ♔f3 a5 24 h5 a4 25 a3 ♖g8 26 ♖cf1 ♔e6 27 ♖h4 ♗c7 28 ♔e2 ♗b8 29 ♘c5+ ♔e7 30 ♖f5 ♗g3 31 ♖h3 ♗d6 32 ♔f3 ♖g5 33 ♘e4 ♖xf5+ 34 gxf5 ♗c7 35 ♔e2 ♔f8 36 ♘f2 ♔e7 37 ♔d2 ♗d8 38 ♔c3 ♗a5+ 39 ♔c2 ♗d8 40 ♘g4 ♖h8 41 h6 ♔f8 42 e4 ♔g8 43 d5 c5 44 e5 fxe5 45 ♘xe5 ♗f6 46 h7+ ♖xh7 47 ♖xh7 ♔xh7 48 ♘xf7 b4 49 ♘d6 c3 50 bxc3 ♗xc3 51 ♘e4 ♗d4 52 d6 bxa3 53 ♔b1 c4 54 ♔a2 ♔g7 55 d7 ♗b6 56 ♔xa3 ♔f8 57 f6 c3 58 ♘xc3 ♔f7 59 ♔xa4 ♗d8 60 ♔b5 ♔xf6 61 ♔c6 ♔e6 ½-½

Black seems to be just about okay after 6 e3 ♗f5, so we shall now move on to the systems with 6 ♕c2 rather than the quieter 6 e3.

Game 81
Kasparov-Ivanchuk
Wijk aan Zee 1999

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 c6!? 6 ♕c2

Preventing ...♗c8-f5. Black's most common response is 6...♗e7 (as in Games 82-86), but here we shall discuss an interesting way for Black to attempt to cross White's plan.



6...♘a6!?

Question 11. Why not 6...g6 to play ...♗c8-f5 on the next move?

Answer 11. This was tried in Vladimirov-Diaz, Havana 1986, when White was tempted into 7 ♘xd5?! ♕xd5 8 ♗xf6 ♗b4+ 9 ♔d1 0-0 10 e4 ♖e8 11 ♗d3 and now 11...♕e6 12 ♗e5 c5 would have been very dicey for White. However, as Vladimirov points out, simply 7 e3 ♗f5 8 ♕b3! forces an unpleasant queenside weakness on Black with 8...b6.

Question 12. So what is the point of 6...♘a6?

Answer 12. Black's wishes to play ...♘a6-b4 to chase the queen from the b1-h7 diagonal, clearing the way for ...♗c8-f5 thereafter.

7 e3

Question 13. How about 7 a3? Isn't the knight just silly on a6?

Answer 13. After 7 a3, the black knight moves to e6 (via c7). Remember the number of times in the previous chapter that Black played ...♘b8-d7, ...♖f8-e8 and then ...♘f8-e6? Here, Black has achieved this without having to play ...♖f8-e8, while extracting the tempo a2-a3 on the way. Se.Ivanov suggests the continuation 7 a3 ♘c7 8 e3 ♘e6 9 ♗h4 g6!? 10 ♗d3 ♘g7 11 f3! (the difference in this system – White can set up e3-e4 to prevent his opponent from exchanging light-squared bishops with ...♗c8-f5) 11...♗e7 12 ♘ge2 0-0 13 0-0 ♘f5 14 ♗f2 c5 with unclear play.

The text is the most critical, and Kasparov naturally goes for it!

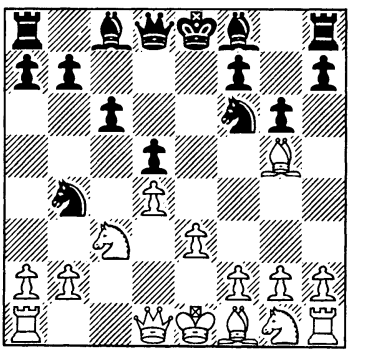
7...♘b4 8 ♕d2!?

This is a very interesting moment. In 1994, Kasparov's current chief second, Yuri Dokhoian, produced a beautiful idea that built on Nigel Short's suggestion of 8 ♕b1!? The point is that after 8 ♕d1, Nigel Short had produced very active counterplay against Ehlvest at the Manila Olympiad 1992, with 8...♗f5 9 ♖c1 ♕a5! 10 ♗xf6 gxf6 11 ♕d2 (11 ♕b3 is met by 11...♕b6! according to Ehlvest) 11...♘xa2! 12 ♖a1 ♘xc3 13 ♖xa5 ♘e4 14 ♖xd5!? (14 ♕d1 ♗b4+ 15 ♔e2 ♗xa5 16 f3 ♘d6 17 ♔f2 0-0-0 18 ♗d3 ♗g6 gives Black good counterplay due to the weakness of e3, while 14 ♕c2 ♗b4+ 15 ♔d1 ♗xa5 16 ♗d3 ♘xf2+ 17 ♕xf2 ♗xd3 18 ♕xf6 ♖g8 19 ♘f3 ♖xg2 20 ♕h8+ ♔e7 21 ♕xa8 ♖xb2 wins for Black according to Short. Consequently White feels obliged to return the queen.) 14...♘xd2 15 ♖xf5 ♗b4 16 ♔e2 ♔e7 17 ♘f3 ♘c4 18 ♔d1 ♘d6 19 ♖f4 a5 with approximate equality. Dokhoian played 8 ♕b1 first (still preventing ...♗c8-f5) and only after 8...g6 did he play 9 ♕d1!

see following diagram

Question 14. What is the point of this?

Answer 14. Here Black no longer has any counterplay with ...♕d8-a5 as the knight on f6 is hanging. White was pleasantly better after 9...a5 10 a3 ♘a6 11 ♗d3 in Dokhoian-Vaganian Tilburg 1994. The subtle 8...h6!? 9 ♗h4 g6 has been suggested, but after Dokhoian's 10 ♕d1 (10 a3 ♗f5 11 e4 dxe4 12 axb4 ♕xd4 'unclear' also doesn't look great for Black) 10...♗f5 11 ♖c1 g5 12 ♗g3, 12...♕a5 can still be met by 13 ♕f3!, while 12...♘e4 13 a3 ♘xc3 14 ♖xc3 ♘a2 15 ♖b3 does have the feel of a tragedy in the making for Black!



Clearly, however, Dokhoian's 'boss' saw something he didn't like, and Ivanchuk evidently has something ready. Maybe 8...h6 9 ♗h4 g5 10 ♗g3 ♘e4!? with the idea of 11 ♘xe4 (11 a3 ♗f5!) 11...dxe4 12 ♕xe4+ (12 a3!?) 12...♗e7 with ...♕d8-a5 and ...♗c8-f5 to follow?

8...♗f5 9 ♖c1 a5 10 a3 ♘a6 11 ♘ge2

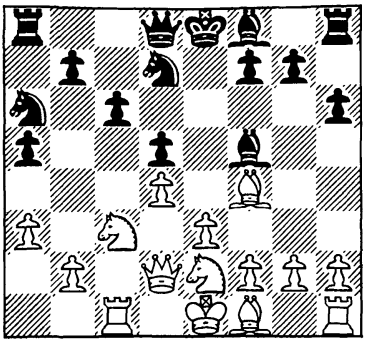
Vyzmanavin-Se.Ivanov, Elista 1995, was equal after 11 ♗d3 ♗xd3 12 ♕xd3 ♗e7 13 ♘f3 0-0 14 h4 ♖e8 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♔f1 ♘b8 17 g3 ♘d7.

11...h6 12 ♗f4 ♘d7

see following diagram

The first new move of the game. Barsov-Se.Ivanov, Germany 1994, saw 12...♗d6 13 ♘g3 ♗h7 14 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 15 ♘a4 0-0!? 16 ♕xa5 h5!? with some play for the pawn.

13 ♘g3 ♗e6 14 e4 ♘b6 15 exd5 ♘xd5 16 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 17 ♗c4 ♕xg2 18 ♕e3 0-0-0 19 ♗xe6+ fxe6 20 ♕xe6+ ♖d7 21 ♕e8+ ♖d8 22 ♕e6+ ½-½



The calmer way in which Black can try to exploit the 6 ♕c2 move order is to play an early ...♘f6-h5 system to free his position by exchanging the dark-squared bishops.

Game 82
Ward-Parker
4NCL 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 c6 6 ♕c2 ♗e7 7 e3 ♘bd7 8 ♗d3 ♘h5!?

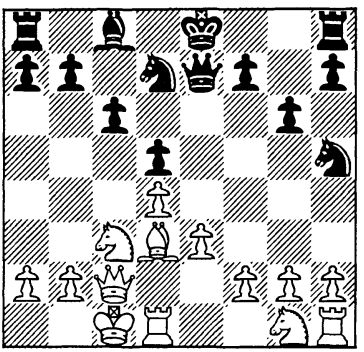
The standard 8...0-0 9 ♘ge2 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♘f8 is seen in Games 83-86.

9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7

Question 15. Can't Black just play this against 6 e3, 7 ♗d3 and 8 ♘ge2 as well?

Answer 15. It is much less good for Black in that move order. After 6 e3 ♗e7 7 ♗d3 ♘bd7 8 ♘ge2 ♘h5 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 10 g4 ♘gf6 11 ♘g3! g6 12 ♕e2 ♘b6 13 g5 ♘g8 14 h4 h6 (14...h5 15 0-0-0 ♗d7 16 e4 0-0-0 17 ♖he1 ♕d6 18 exd5 cxd5 19 ♕e5 ♕xe5 20 ♖xe5 was clearly better for White in Kosten-Legky, France 1998) 15 0-0-0!? (Kharitonov suggests 15 f4 hxg5 16 fxg5!? [16 hxg5 ♖xh1+ 17 ♘xh1 ♗e6 18 ♘g3 0-0-0 19 0-0-0 ♕d7 20 ♖h1 ♘e7 intending ...♘e7-f5 is unclear according to Kharitonov] as interesting) 15...hxg5 16 h5 gxh5 17 ♘xh5 ♖h6 18 ♖dg1 ♔d8 19 ♕f3 (19 e4 ♗d7 and 19 f4 f6 20 e4 dxe4 21 ♘xe4 g4, intending ...f6-f5, are both unclear according to Kharitonov) 19...♗d7! 20 ♕g3 f6 21 f4 ♗e8 22 fxg5 fxg5 23 ♕xg5 ♕xg5 24 ♖xg5 ♘f6 was soon agreed drawn in Vyzmanavin-Kharitonov, Helsinki 1992, but this line looks very dodgy for Black to me.

10 0-0-0 g6



11 ♔b1

Ward's concept of putting the knight on f3 in this variation is not very common, but it works very effectively here. 11 ♘ge2 is normal when 11...♘b6 12 ♘g3 ♘g7 (Black is trying to prove that the knight has few active chances on g3) 13 ♔b1 ♗d7 14 ♖c1 0-0-0 15 ♘a4 ♘xa4 16 ♕xa4 ♔b8 17 ♖c3 b6 18 ♖a3 (18 ♗a6 to prevent Black from regrouping with ...♖d8-c8-c7 was played in Kasparov-Andersson, Reykjavik 1988, when 18...♘e6 19 ♖hc1 ♖he8 20 ♕b3 ♕d6 21 ♘f1 ♔a8 22 ♘d2 ♘c7 was reasonably okay for Black) 18...♗e8 19 ♕c2 ♖c8 20 ♖c1 ♗d7 21 ♕d2 h5 22 ♖b3 ♘e6 gave balanced chances in Timman-Short, Linares, Candidates Match 1993.

11...♘b6 12 h3 ♘g7 13 g4 ♗d7 14 ♘f3!? 0-0-0 15 ♕b3 ♘e8 16 a4!

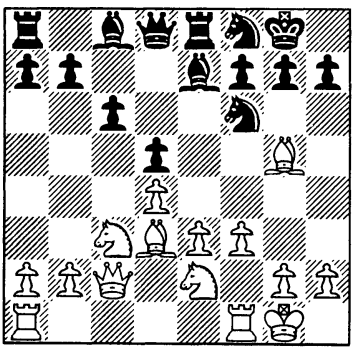
This aggressive thrust soon has Black scrambling just to stay on the board.

16...♗e6 17 a5 ♘c4 18 ♕a4 ♕f6 19 ♗e2 ♘c7 20 ♖c1 h5 21 g5 ♕f5+ 22 ♔a1 ♖he8 23 b3 ♘d6 24 a6 ♘xa6 25 ♘e5 ♘b8 26 ♕xa7 ♕xf2 27 ♘a4 ♕xe2 28 ♘b6+ ♔c7 29 ♘a8+ ♔c8 30 ♘b6+ ♔c7 31 ♘a8+ ♔c8 32 ♘b6+ ½-½

Having dealt with the tricky question of move order, we now move on to the main line.

Game 83
Gelfand-Piket
Wijk aan Zee 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 c6 6 ♕c2 ♗e7 7 e3 0-0 8 ♗d3 ♘bd7 9 ♘ge2 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♘f8 11 f3!



The key difference from the ♘f3 systems: White threatens to occupy the centre with e3-e4 without accepting an IQP. Since Black cannot do the same with his ...c6-c5 central break, White inevitably has a slight dynamic edge. The less dynamic 11 a3 is considered in Game 86.

11...♗e6

The immediate 11...c5 is suicidal: Vaisser-C.Flear, French Team Championship 1998, saw 12 ♗b5 ♗d7 13 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 14 ♖ad1 c4 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 e4 dxe4 17 ♘xe4 ♕c6 18 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 19 ♕xc4 with a clear extra pawn for White.

Nonetheless, the idea of ...c6-c5 is tempting in this type of position as White has weakened the e3-square with f2-f3.

Question 16. Why is this important?

Answer 16. After ...c6-c5, d4xc5 then ...♗e7xc5 will give Black pressure against the e3-pawn that he would not have in the ♘f3 system.

With 11...♗e6, Black begins preparations to achieve this break by first mobilising his queenside. The older but perfectly playable alternative 11...♘h5!? is the subject of Game 85.

12 ♖ad1

12 ♖ae1 is seen in the next main game, while Van Wely-Piket, Antwerp 1996, saw equality after 12 ♗h4 ♖c8 13 ♖ad1 a6 14 ♔h1 ♘g6 15 ♗f2 c5! 16 dxc5 ♗xc5 17 ♘d4 ♗xd4 18 exd4 ♘f4 19 ♖fe1 ♘xd3 20 ♕xd3.

12...♖c8 13 a3

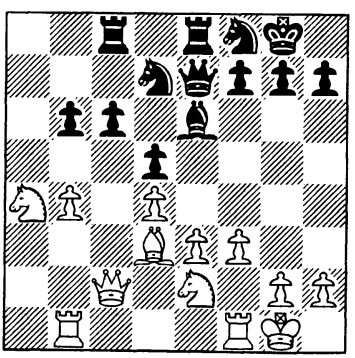
White prepares b2-b4 in order to stop his opponent from breaking out with ...c6-c5. The sharper 13 e4 gave no more than dynamic equality in Timman-Yusupov, Riga 1995, after 13...dxe4 14 fxe4 ♘g4 15 ♗f4 (15 ♗c1 ♗g5! is nice for Black according to Timman, while 15 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 16 ♕d2 c5 17 d5 ♗d7 followed by ...♕d6 and ...♘g6 is equal according to Lautier) 15...♘g6 16 e5 ♗g5! 17 ♗xg6 hxg6 18 ♕d2 ♗xf4 19 ♘xf4 ♗c4 20 ♖fe1 c5!

Instead 13 ♔h1 was tried in Lautier-Oll, Parnu 1998, ready to meet 13...c5 with 14 dxc5 ♖xc5 15 ♕a4 a6 16 ♗b1 with a slight edge. Joel Lautier recommends 13...♘g6 instead.

13...a6

Intending ...c6-c5.

14 ♘a4 ♘6d7 15 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 16 b4 a5! 17 ♖b1 axb4 18 axb4 b6!



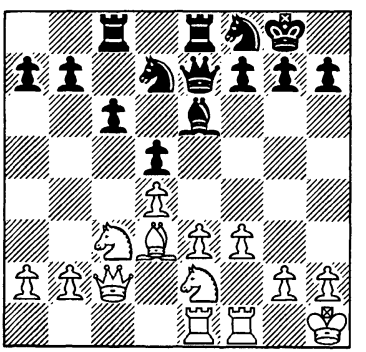
Black is extremely solid here and,

unsurprisingly, the game soon fizzles out to a draw.

19 ♖fc1 g6 20 ♘f4 ♗f5 21 ♖e1 ♗xd3 22 ♘xd3 ♘e6 23 ♘c3 ♘f6 24 ♕f2 c5 25 dxc5 bxc5 26 b5 d4 27 exd4 cxd4 28 ♘e4 ♘xe4 29 ♖xe4 ♕a3 30 ♕d2 ♖c3 31 ♘f4 ½-½

Game 84
Lutz-Yusupov
Tilburg 1993

1 c4 e6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 d4 ♘f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♗d3 ♘bd7 8 ♘ge2 ♖e8 9 0-0 c6 10 ♕c2 ♘f8 11 f3 ♗e6 12 ♖ae1 ♖c8 13 ♔h1 ♘6d7 14 ♗xe7 ♕xe7



15 ♕d2

15 e4 is met by Black's standard counter: 15...dxe4 16 fxe4 c5.

15...♘b6 16 b3 ♖cd8

Intending to manoeuvre the knight to d6 via c8.

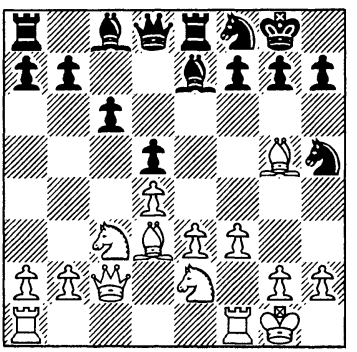
17 a4 ♕b4 18 ♘e4 ♕xd2 19 ♘xd2 ♗d7!

After this move, preparing ...♘f8-e6, Black has no problems according to Yusupov.

20 ♘g3 a5 21 ♖e2 ♘e6 22 ♖c1 ♘c8 23 f4 ♘d6 24 ♘f3 f6 25 ♔g1 ♖e7 26 h4 ♖de8 27 ♔f2 ♘d8 28 ♖ee1 ♘8f7 29 ♘h2 ♘h6 30 ♘gf1 ♗f5 31 ♗e2 ♘e4+ 32 ♔g1 g5 33 g4 gxf4 34 gxf5 ♖g7 35 ♗g4 ♘xg4 36 ♘xg4 ♖xg4+ 37 ♔h2 f3 38 ♖c2 ♖xh4+ 39 ♔g1 ♔f7 0-1

Game 85
Vaisser-Bricard
French Team Championship 1998

1 d4 e6 2 c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♗d3 ♘bd7 8 ♘ge2 ♖e8 9 0-0 c6 10 ♕c2 ♘f8 11 f3 ♘h5!?



This older line, forcing White to expose his centre very early, is quite reasonable in my opinion.

12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 e4 dxe4 14 fxe4 ♗e6!

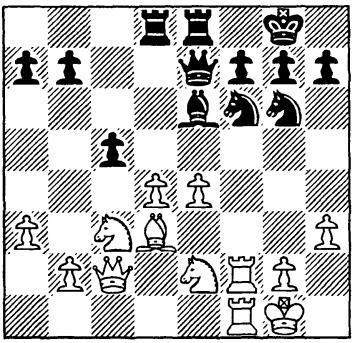
This allows Black to aim for ...c6-c5 without fearing ♘c3-d5. 14...♗g4?!, as in Ivanchuk-Yusupov, Brussels Candidates Match 1991, turned out very unpleasantly for Black after 15 e5! ♖ad8 16 ♘e4 ♘g6 17 ♖ad1 ♖f8 18 h3 ♗xe2 19 ♗xe2 ♘hf4 20 ♗c4.

15 ♖f2

15 e5 c5 16 d5 ♗d7 and 15 ♖ad1 ♖ad8 with ...c6-c5 to follow are both fine for Black according to Bareev.

15...♘f6 16 h3 ♖ad8 17 ♖af1 ♘g6 18 a3 c5!?

18...♖f8 was tried in Bareev-Ahlander, Naestved 1988, when after 19 b4 either 19...b6, intending ...c6-c5 or ...a7-a5 immediately would have been fine for Black according to Bareev. The text seems even more conclusive, however.



19 e5 ♘d5 20 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 21 ♘f4 ♘xf4 22 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 23 ♖xf4 cxd4 24 ♖xd4 ♗xg2 25 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 26 ♕xg2 ♔xh7 27 ♕e4+ ♔g8 28 ♕f5 ♕c5+ 29 ♖f2 ♕d5 30 ♖e2 ♕d1+ 31 ♔f2 ♖e8 32 ♕e4 ♖e6 33 ♕xb7 ♖g6 34 ♕c8+ ♔h7 35 ♕f5 ♕d4+ 36 ♔f3 ♕d5+ 37 ♔f2 ♕c5+ 38 ♔f3 ♕c6+ 39 ♔e3 ♔g8 40 ♖c2 ♖g3+ 41 ♔d4 ♕b6+ 42 ♔d5 ♕d8+ 43 ♔c4 g6 44 ♕f2 ♖xh3 45 ♖d2 ♕a5 46 ♕d4 ♕a6+ 47 ♔b4 ♕b7+ 48 ♔a4 ♕c6+ 49 ♔b4 ♕e6 50 ♕d5 ♕b6+ 51 ♔a4 ♖h4+ 52 b4 ♕a6+ 53 ♕a5 ♕c6+ 54 ♕b5 ♕c8 55 ♕d5 ♔g7 56 ♕d6 ♖h3 57 ♕f6+ ♔h6 58 ♖d8 ♕c2+ 59 ♔b5 ♕e2+ 60 ♔a4 ♕c2+ 61 ♔b5 ♕e2+ ½-½

Game 86
Topalov-Piket
Amber (blindfold) 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♗g5 ♗e7 5 cxd5 exd5 6 e3 c6 7 ♗d3 0-0 8 ♕c2 ♘bd7 9 ♘ge2 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♘f8 11 a3!?

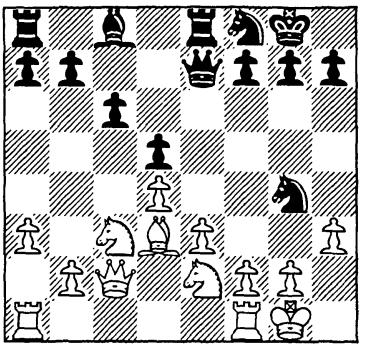
A much more solid continuation than 11 f3. White tempers his ambitions and just hints at playing b2-b4.

11...♘g4 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 h3

see following diagram

13...♘h6!?

13...♘f6 followed by ...♘f8-e6-g5 seems more reasonable as the knight gets rather stranded on h6.



14 ♘g3 ♕h4 15 ♖fe1 ♗e6 16 b4 a6 17 ♘a4 ♖e7 18 ♘c5 ♖ae8 19 ♗f1 ♗c8 20 a4 ♘g6 21 b5 axb5 22 axb5 ♕g5 23 bxc6 bxc6 24 ♖a8 ♘h4 25 ♖b1 ♘6f5 26 ♘xf5 ♘xf5 27 ♖bb8 ♘d6 28 ♘d3 ♖c7 29 ♕c5 ♕e7 30 ♘b4 g6 31 ♗a6 ♕e6 32 ♗xc8 ♘xc8 33 ♖a6 ♔g7 34 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 35 ♕xc6 ♕xc6 36 ♘xc6 ♘d6 37 ♖xe8 ♘xe8 38 g4 h6 39 f3 ♔f6 40 ♔f2 ♔e6 41 h4 ♘d6 42 ♘e5 ♘b5 43 ♘d3 g5 44 h5 ♘a3 45 ♔e2 ♘c4 46 ♘f2 ♘d6 47 e4 ♘e8 48 ♘d1 ♘f6 49 e5 ♘d7 50 ♘e3 f6 51 exf6 ♘xf6 52 ♔d3 ♘g8 53 ♘f5 ♔d7 54 ♔e3 ♔e6 55 f4 ♔f6 56 ♔f3 ♔f7 57 ♘xh6+ ♘xh6 58 fxg5 ♘g8 59 ♔f4 ♔e6 60 g6 ♔f6 61 g5+ ♔e6 62 g7 ♘e7 63 h6 ♘g6+ 64 ♔g4 ♔f7 65 ♔f5 ♔g8 66 ♔f6 ♘h4 67 h7+ 1-0

We now turn to Kasparov's favourite move order, 3...♗e7.

Game 87
Vaisser-San Segundo
Greece 1997

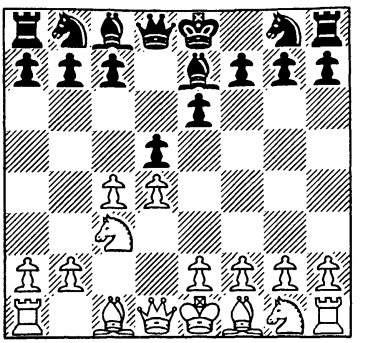
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7

Question 17. What is the point of 3...♗e7?

Answer 17. Black does not allow his opponent to follow up the exchange on d5 with ♗c1-g5. The bishop is thus played to f4, which gives this line a distinct identity.

Question 18. Is the bishop better on f4 than

on g5?

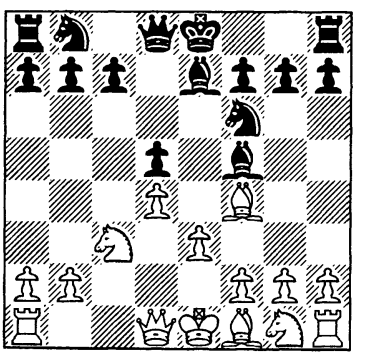


Answer 18. As we saw in the previous chapter, there are many occasions where White voluntarily retreats the bishop to f4 even at the cost of a tempo. However, White exerts much less pressure on d5 in this line, which gives Black an interesting possibility which Kasparov has favoured.

4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗f4 ♘f6

See Game 91 for 5...c6.

6 e3 ♗f5!?



And here it is! With the bishop on g5, such a move would always lose a pawn to ♗g5xf6 followed by ♕d1-b3. Here White has less pressure on the black centre, which offers Black some extra tactical resources.

7 ♕b3

The critical test of Black's idea, but 7 ♘ge2, as in Game 90, is also possible.

7...♘c6 8 a3!?

I like this simple move. It prevents all of Black's ...♘c6-b4 tactics whilst maintaining White's pressure against the b7- and d5-pawns. The greedy 8 ♕xb7 and 8 g4 are considered in Games 88 and 89 respectively.

8...♘a5!?

8...♖b8 was seen in Kir.Georgiev-Kotronias, Corfu 1991, when 9 ♘f3 0-0 10 ♗e2 h6!? (10...a6 as in Spraggett-Yusupov, Hastings 1989, looked better for White after 11 0-0 b5 and now 12 ♖fc1 ♘a5 13 ♕d1 ♘c4 14 ♖a2, intending ♗e2-d3, was best according to Spraggett) 11 0-0 ♗e6! 12 ♘d2 ♗d6 13 ♗xd6 cxd6?! (13...♕xd6 is a touch better for White) 14 ♗f3 ♕a5 15 ♕a2! ♘e7 16 b4 was not very inspiring for Black.

9 ♕a4+ c6 10 ♘f3 0-0

10...♘h5? 11 ♗c7! ♕xc7 12 ♘xd5 ♕d8 13 ♘xe7 ♔xe7 14 b4 ♘c4 15 ♗xc4 b5 16 ♕d1 bxc4 17 ♘e5 ♕d5 18 ♕xh5 all held together for White in Gavrikov-Ubilava, Tbilisi 1983.

11 ♗e2

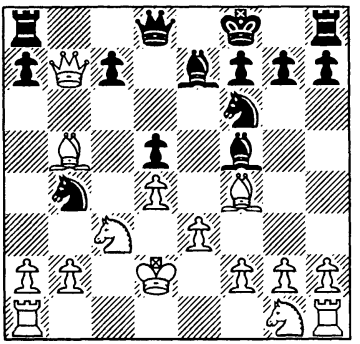
11 ♘e5, as in Burmakin-Koniushkov, Kstovo 1997, is the most accurate way for White to play. After 11...b5 12 ♕d1 ♖c8 13 ♗d3 ♗xd3 14 ♘xd3 ♘c4 15 0-0 ♖e8 16 a4! b4 17 ♘e2, White had a very pleasant advantage.

11...b5 12 ♕d1 ♘c4 13 ♕c1 a5 14 ♘e5 ♕c8 15 0-0 a4 16 ♘xc4 dxc4 17 ♗g5 ♕c7 18 ♖e1 ♖ae8 19 ♗f3 ♗d3 20 e4 ♘d7 21 ♗f4 ♕b6 22 ♕e3 f6 23 ♗g4 ♖d8 24 ♗e6+ ♔h8 25 ♕h3 g5 26 ♗e3 ♕c7 27 ♕h5 ♗d6 28 ♗f5 ♘b6 29 d5 cxd5 30 ♘xd5 ½-½

However, there is also a complicated way to play!

Game 88
Thorsteins-I.Zaitsev
Protvino 1988

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗f4 ♘f6 6 e3 ♗f5 7 ♕b3 ♘c6 8 ♕xb7 ♘b4 9 ♗b5+ ♔f8 10 ♔d2!?



Here 10 ♖d1 is met by Dutreeuw's 10...♗d6!!, as after 11 ♗xd6 cxd6 White cannot avoid the perpetual attack on his queen with ...♖a8-b8-a8.

10...♘e4+!

This seems best. Instead 10...♗d6 fails to 11 ♗xd6 cxd6 12 ♗e8!, while Azmaiparashvili's recommendation of 10...a6 11 ♗a4 ♘d3 12 ♗xc7 ♕c8 13 ♕xc8 ♖xc8 14 ♗a5 ♘xf2 15 ♖f1 ♘2e4+ 16 ♘xe4+ ♘xe4 17 ♔e2 ♘d6 seems very odd, because after Salov's 18 ♘f3, I don't see much compensation for Black.

11 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 12 ♗xc7!?

12 f3 ♖b8 13 ♕xc7 was agreed drawn in Dorfman-Marciano, French Championship 1998, while Zaitsev analyses further 13...♕xc7 14 ♗xc7 ♖xb5 15 fxe4 dxe4 with compensation for the pawn.

12...♕c8 13 ♕xc8+ ♖xc8 14 f3 ♖xc7 15 fxe4 dxe4

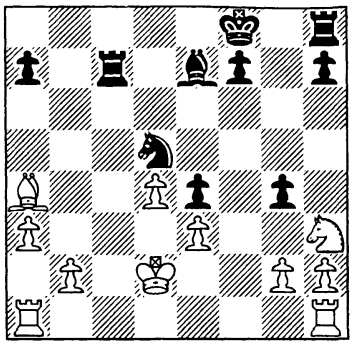
15...♖c2+ 16 ♔d1 ♖xb2 17 a3 ♘a2! 18 ♘e2 ♗xa3 19 ♗c6 ♔e7 20 ♗xd5 ♖c8 21 ♖xa2 ♖b1+ 22 ♔d2 ♗b4+ 23 ♔d3 ♖xh1 24 ♖xa7+ is unclear according to Thorsteins.

16 a3 ♘d5 17 ♘h3 g5!? 18 ♗a4 g4!

see following diagram

The position is complicated, but nevertheless balanced.

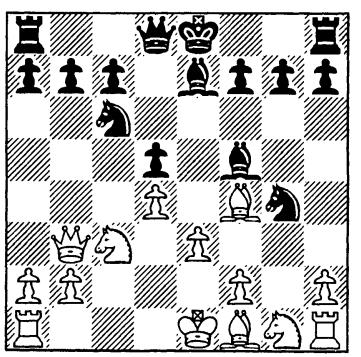
19 ♘f2 f5 20 ♗b3 ♘xe3! 21 ♔xe3 ♖b7 22 ♗e6 ♗g5+ 23 ♔e2 ♔e7 24 ♗xf5 ♖xb2+ 25 ♔e1 ♖f8 26 ♘xe4 ♖xf5 ½-½



Recently, however, White has been (unsuccessfully) trying another approach.

Game 89
Topalov-Kasparov
Linares 1997

1 c4 e6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 d4 ♗e7 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗f4 ♘f6 6 e3 ♗f5 7 ♕b3 ♘c6 8 g4?! ♘xg4

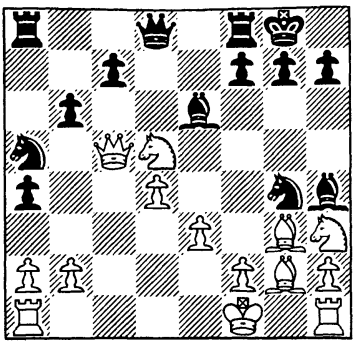


9 ♘xd5?!

9 ♕xd5 is simply met by 9...♕c8 according to Kasparov, while 9 a3!? 0-0 10 ♗g2 ♗h4 11 ♗g3 ♗xg3 12 hxg3 ♘e7 13 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 14 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 15 ♗xd5 ♖ad8! 16 ♗xb7 ♖b8 17 ♗f3 ♖xb2 18 ♘e2 ♘f6 was nothing special for White in Aleksandrov-Azmaiparashvili, World Championship 1997.

9...0-0 10 ♗g2 ♗h4! 11 ♗g3 ♗e6 12

♔f1! a5! 13 ♘h3 a4 14 ♕c4 ♘a5 15 ♕c5 b6



The opening has not been a success for White – he is fighting just to stay on level terms.

16 ♗xh4 bxc5 17 ♗xd8 ♖axd8 18 ♘e7+ ♔h8 19 d5 ♗d7 20 ♖c1 c4 21 ♘g5 h6 22 ♘f3 ♖b8 23 h3 ♘f6 24 ♘d4 ♖xb2 25 ♗f3 ♖xa2 26 ♔g2 ♖e8 27 ♘ec6 ♗xc6 28 ♘xc6 ♘xc6 29 dxc6 ♖xe3 30 ♖xc4 ♖b3 31 ♖d4 ♖bb2 32 ♖f1 ♖d2 33 ♖b4 ♔h7! 34 ♖b7 ♘e8 35 ♔g3 g6 36 ♖e1 ♘d6 37 ♖xc7 ♔g7 38 ♖d7 ♘f5+ 39 ♔f4 ♖xf2 0-1

Game 90
Sherbakov-Koniushkov
Krasnodar 1997

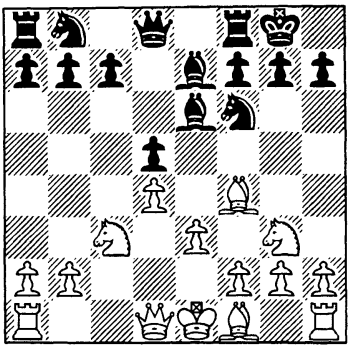
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗f4 ♘f6 6 e3 ♗f5 7 ♘ge2!?

This is another common way to avoid the complications.

7...0-0 8 ♘g3

8 ♖c1, aiming to prevent Black from achieving ...c7-c5, was played by Kasparov against Karpov in their World Championship match at Seville 1987. After 8...c6 9 ♘g3 ♗e6 (9...♗g6 10 h4 h6 11 h5 ♗h7 12 ♗d3 is clearly better for White according to Dorfman) 10 ♗d3 ♖e8 11 ♕b3 ♕b6 12 ♕c2 ♘bd7 13 0-0 g6 14 h3 ♗f8 15 ♘ge2 ♖ac8 16 ♕d2 ♘h5 17 ♗h2 ♘g7 18 g4 ♕d8 19 f3 ♘b6 20 b3 ♗a3 21 ♖c2 the game was agreed drawn.

8...♗e6



9 ♗d3

The interesting 9 ♕b3!? b6 10 ♗e2 c5 11 0-0 ♘c6 12 ♖fd1 led to an unclear position in Kharlov-Korneev, Russian Championship 1998, after 12...c4!? 13 ♕c2 a6 14 ♘f5 b5 15 a3 ♕d7 16 ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 17 f3 ♗f5.

9...c5 10 dxc5 ♗xc5 11 0-0 ♘c6 12 ♖c1 d4!?

This seems very reasonable. Gelfand-Kasparov, Linares 1994, saw White keep a definite edge after 12...♗d6 13 ♘ge2 ♖c8 14 ♗b1 ♗xf4 15 ♘xf4 ♗g4 16 f3 ♗e6 17 ♕d2.

13 ♘b5

13 ♘ce4 ♗e7 14 ♘c5 ♗xc5 15 ♖xc5 dxe3 16 ♗xe3 ♘b4 17 ♗f5 ♗xa2 was very comfortable for Black in Lautier-Ivanchuk, Moscow Olympiad 1994.

13...♗b6 14 e4 ♘g4 15 h3 ♘ge5 16 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 17 f4 ♘xd3 18 ♕xd3 f6 19 ♘a3 ½-½

The position is unclear but balanced.

Black's traditional main line has been 5...c6 instead of 5...♘f6, intending to meet 6 e3 with 6...♗f5.

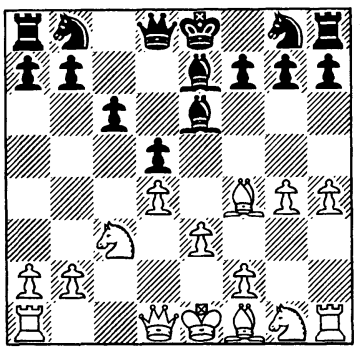
Game 91
Yusupov-Lputian
Germany-Armenia match 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 cxd5 exd5

5 ♗f4 c6 6 e3 ♗f5

Recently at the Elista Olympiad 1998, Lputian played 6...♘f6 against me, but after 7 ♗d3 0-0 8 h3 ♘bd7 9 ♘f3 ♖e8 10 ♕c2 ♘f8, he was a tempo down on the 10 h3 and 11 ♗f4 manoeuvre in the ♘f3 system. This is not fatal, of course, but neither is it ideal for Black. After 11 0-0 ♘g6 12 ♗h2 ♗d6 13 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 14 ♖b1 ♕e7 15 b4 ♘e4 16 b5 ♘g5 17 ♘xg5 ♕xg5 18 bxc6 bxc6 19 f4! White stood extremely well.

7 g4 ♗e6 8 h4!



8...♗xh4

The most consistent continuation. Not 8...♘d7 9 h5! and now 9...♕b6 10 ♖b1 ♘gf6 11 f3 h6 12 ♗d3 c5 13 ♘ge2 ♖c8 14 ♔f1 0-0 15 g5! hxg5 16 ♗xg5 ♖fe8 17 ♕e1 cxd4 18 exd4 ♘h7 19 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 20 ♕g3 was exceptionally unpleasant for Black in Knaak-Geller, Moscow 1982, as was 11...0-0 12 ♗d3 c5 13 ♘ge2 ♖ac8 14 ♔f1 cxd4 15 exd4 ♗d6 16 ♕d2 ♘e8 17 ♔g2 ♕d8 18 ♖be1 ♘b6 19 ♗b1 ♘c4 20 ♕d3 in Beliavsky-Geller, USSR Championship 1983.

Instead of 9...♕b6, 9...♘h6 was tried by Karpov against Kasparov in the 1985 World Championship in Moscow, but 10 ♗e2 ♘b6 11 ♖c1 ♗d6 (11...♘c4 12 ♗xc4 dxc4 13 ♗xh6 gxh6 is suggested as unclear by Kasparov) 12 ♘h3 ♗xf4 13 ♘xf4 ♗d7 14 ♖g1 g5 15 hxg6 hxg6 16 ♔d2 ♕e7 17 b3 g5 18 ♘d3 0-0-0 19 ♖h1 was very nice for White.

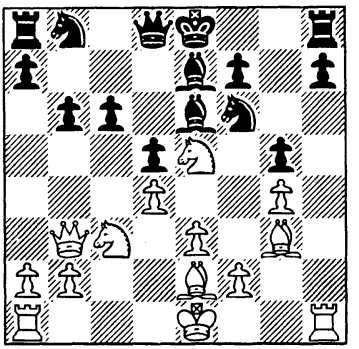
9 ♕b3 b6 10 ♘f3 ♗e7 11 ♘e5 g5?!

Alternatively, 11...♘f6 12 g5 ♘fd7 13 g6 ♘xe5 14 ♗xe5 ♗f6! (14...fxg6 15 ♗xg7 ♖g8 16 ♖xh7 is clearly better for White according to Gulko) 15 ♖xh7 0-0! 16 ♗g3 fxg6 17 ♖h2 ♔f7! 18 0-0-0 and now 18...♖h8?! 19 ♖xh8 ♕xh8 20 e4! was horrible for Black in Gulko-Lputian, Glendale 1994, but even the improvement 18...♘d7 (Gulko) 19 e4 ♗e7 is still not desirable for Black.

The text seems no better, however.

12 ♗g3 ♘f6 13 ♗e2

13 f3 h5! is annoying according to Yusupov.



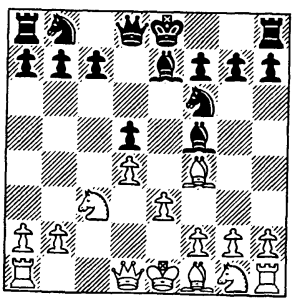
13...♕c8 14 ♖c1! ♘bd7 15 ♘b5 ♘c5! 16 dxc5 cxb5 17 ♕xb5+! ♔f8 18 ♘c6 ♘e4 19 ♘xe7 ♔xe7 20 ♗d6+ ♔f6 21 ♕b4!

White has emerged from the complications with a clear advantage.

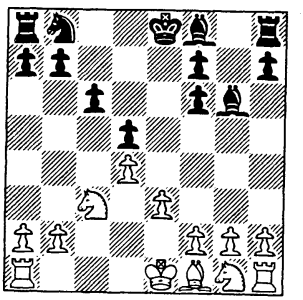
21...♔g7! 22 c6 ♘xd6 23 ♕xd6 ♕d8 24 ♕e5+ ♕f6 25 ♕xf6+ ♔xf6 26 ♔d2 ♖ac8 27 f4 ♖c7 28 ♖h6+ ♔g7 29 fxg5 ♔f8 30 b4 ♔e7 31 b5 ♔d6 32 ♗d3 ♖g8 33 ♗xh7 ♖xg5 34 ♗f5 ♖g8 35 a4 ♖e7 36 ♖ch1 ♔c5 37 ♗xe6 fxe6 38 ♖h7 ♖xh7 39 ♖xh7 ♖xg4 40 ♖xa7 e5 41 ♖d7! ♖g8 42 c7 ♖c8 43 ♔c3 d4+ 44 exd4+ exd4+ 45 ♔d3 ♔b4 46 ♔xd4 ♔xa4 47 ♔d5 ♔xb5 48 ♔d6 ♔c4 49 ♖d8 ♖xc7 50 ♔xc7 b5 51 ♔b6! 1-0

Summary
In my opinion, these lines are not as good for White as their reputation suggests. In the 3...♘f6 variation, 5...c6, aiming for the endgame, seems a good choice so long as Dokhoian's 8 ♕b1 and 9 ♕d1 can be countered. Otherwise, even the main lines as in Game 85 seem perfectly reasonable for Black.

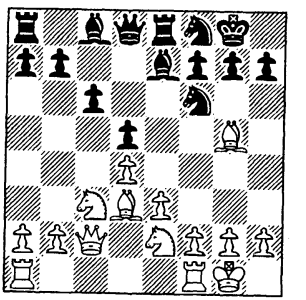
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6
3...♗e7 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗f4
5...♘f6 6 e3 ♗f5 *(D)*
7 ♕b3 ♘c6
8 a3 – *Game 87*
8 ♕xb7 – *Game 88*
8 g4 – *Game 89*
7 ♘ge2 – *Game 90*
5...c6 – *Game 91*
4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5 c6 6 ♕c2
6 e3 ♗f5 7 ♕f3 ♗g6 8 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 9 ♕xf6 gxf6 *(D)*
10 ♔d2 – *Game 78*
10 ♘f3 – *Game 79*
10 h4 – *Game 80*
6...♗e7
6...♘a6 – *Game 81*
7 e3 ♘bd7 8 ♗d3 0-0
8...♘h5 – *Game 82*
9 ♘ge2 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♘f8 *(D)* **11 f3**
11 a3 – *Game 86*
11...♗e6
11...♘h5 – *Game 85*
12 ♖ad1
12 ♖ae1 – *Game 84*
12...♖c8 – *Game 83*



6...♗f5



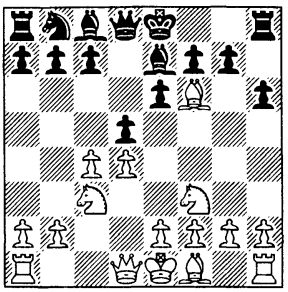
9...gxf6



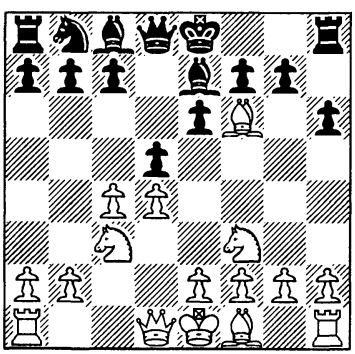
10...♘f8

CHAPTER NINE

Systems with ♗xf6



In this chapter we shall examine lines in which White replies to the attack on his bishop by capturing the knight on f6 immediately. This can arise via two move orders: 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗xf6



or 5...0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗xf6.

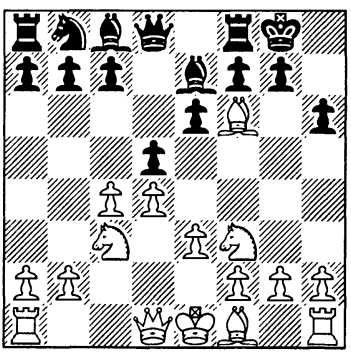
see following diagram

Question 1. Why does White want to concede the bishop pair like this?

Answer 1. White's reasons are the following:

1. By capturing on f6 immediately, White speeds up his development – he doesn't waste time on a retreating move.

2. Removing the knight from f6 allows White to consider the e2-e4 central break, as well as loosening Black's protection of the d5-square.



3. White disrupts Black's most harmonious method of development – the knight on f6 and the dark-squared bishop on the f8-a3 diagonal – by drawing the bishop to f6.

4. Black's main freeing idea in the QGD is to play a move like ...♘f6-e4 or ...♘f6-d5, using the opposition of the dark-squared bishops on the h4-d8 diagonal to exchange two sets of minor pieces. The following scenario is very common: White refuses the exchange of dark-squared bishops and Black wins White's dark-squared bishop for his knight eventually anyway. With ♗g5xf6, White takes a practical decision. By giving up

the bishop pair immediately, White releases a pressure point on his opponent's position, but ensures that Black does not get the chance to try to free himself by playing the typical ...♘f6-e4, and gives himself a wider choice of plans at the outset.

We have seen the idea of ♗g5xf6 many times before in the QGD - in the Tartakower or the Exchange variations, for example - but here it is unusual because White's aim is dynamic rather than structural.

Question 2. What about move order? Should you castle first or play ...h7-h6 first?

Answer 2. This seems a rather uncertain point! Every QGD expert has a fair sprinkling of games with both, though 5...h6 does tend to be the most popular choice.

Question 3. What are the differences?

Answer 3. If you play 5...h6, you have to reckon with aggressive plans using the option of e2-e4 in one move. If you play 5...0-0, then these options are obviously not available for White after 6 e3, but White does gain the interesting move orders 6 cxd5 and 6 ♕c2.

Question 4. So which do you recommend?

Answer 4. I would play 5...h6 - it just seems the least hassle!

Game 92
P.Cramling-Amura
Merlo (match) 1994

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗xf6 ♗xf6

Here White has a wide choice between the game continuation, 7 ♕c2 (Game 93), 7 ♕d2 (Game 94) and 7 e3 (Games 95-100).

7 ♕b3!?

Question 5. Hey, why doesn't White just play 7 e4?

Answer 5. It is just a little bit early for this move as the white pieces are not yet well placed to cover the d4-pawn. Thus in Oll-Vaganian, Moscow Olympiad 1994, Black stood very well after 7...dxe4 8 ♘xe4 ♘c6 9 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 10 ♕d2 0-0 11 ♖d1 e5 12 dxe5 ♘xe5 13 ♘xe5 ♕xe5+ 14 ♗e2 ♗g4 15 f3 ♗f5 .

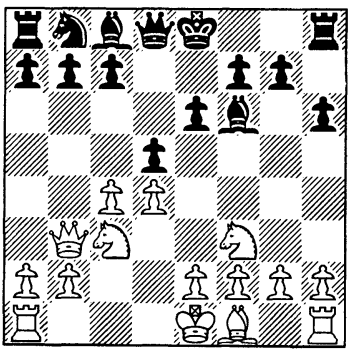
Question 6. So what does 7 ♕b3 do?

Answer 6. With 7 ♕b3, White uses several of the ideas behind the early exchange on f6:

1. White threatens to win the pawn on d5, which now lacks the protection of the knight on f6.

2. White uses the time saved on ♗g5-h4 to continue the development of his queenside.

3. By freeing d1 for the white rook (with gain of time) White hopes to bring sufficient cover to the d4-pawn to be able to play e2-e4.



7...c6

The normal move in this position: Black defends his central pawn and maintains his flexibility. Note, however, that as the c6-square is no longer available to Black's knight, White's chances of achieving e2-e4 have gone up considerably.

An alternative plan was tried in Yusupov-Lputian, European Club Cup 1997, when 7...dxc4 8 ♕xc4 a6 9 ♘e4 ♗e7 10 ♖c1 0-0 11 e3 (11 ♕xc7 ♕xc7 12 ♖xc7 ♘c6 followed by ...♗e7-d8 traps the rook!) 11...♗d7 12 ♘e5 ♗d6 13 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 14 ♗e2 ♘f6 15 ♘c5 ♗xc5 16 ♕xc5 c6 was fairly equal.

8 ♖d1

Cramling-Gurieli, Women's Candidates 1997, saw the more aggressive 8 0-0-0 dxc4 9

♕xc4 b5 10 ♕b3 a5 11 e4 a4 12 ♕c2 ♘a6 13 ♔b1 0-0 14 h4 a3 15 b3 ♘b4 16 ♕d2 ♗b7 17 ♕e3 ♕a5 18 e5 ♗e7 19 ♖c1 ♖ac8 which turned out very nicely for Black.

8...♕a5!?

An interesting idea to prevent a rapid e2-e4 from White. Instead 8...0-0 9 e4 dxe4 10 ♘xe4 ♕a5+ 11 ♖d2! ♗e7 12 ♗e2 ♘d7 (12...♗b4 13 ♘c3 ♘d7 14 0-0 ♗xc3 15 bxc3 b6 16 ♖e1 ♗b7 17 ♗d3 was a touch better for White in P.Cramling-Gueneau, French Team Championship 1998) 13 0-0 e5 14 d5 f5 15 ♘c3 c5 16 d6 ♗f6 17 ♖fd1 e4 was rather murky in Lerner-Ahlander, Berlin 1995.

9 e3

Pia Cramling suggests the interesting 9 ♖d2!?, intending e2-e4 next move.

9...0-0 10 ♗d3 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 c5 12 0-0 cxd4 13 exd4 ♘d7!?

13...♘c6 14 d5 exd5 15 ♘xd5 would have been slightly better for White according to Cramling. Now 14 d5 is met by 14...♘c5 15 ♕c2 ♗xc3!

14 ♗d3 ♖d8 15 ♖fe1 ♘f8?!

The text is a touch passive. Cramling suggest 15...♘b6, aiming for the d5-square.

16 ♘e5!? ♖xd4

Risky. Cramling recommends 16...♗xe5 17 dxe5 ♗d7! 18 ♕xb7 ♖ab8 19 ♕f3 ♖xb2 which seems fine for Black. Now things get a little more hairy for Black.

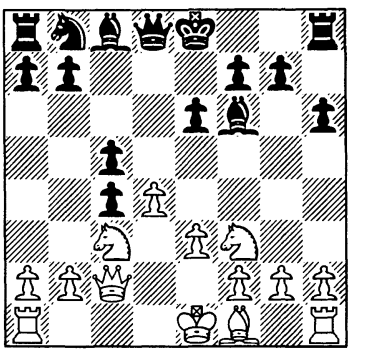
17 ♘c4 ♕d8 18 ♘b5 ♖d7 19 ♗e4 a6 20 ♘bd6 ♖b8 21 ♗c6 ♖e7 22 ♘e8 ♗d4 23 ♕g3 bxc6 24 ♘f6+ ♔h8 25 ♕xb8 gxf6 26 ♘d6 c5 27 ♕xc8 ♕xc8 28 ♘xc8 ♖c7 29 ♘b6 ♗xb2 30 ♖d8 ♔g7 31 ♘c4 ♗d4 32 ♖b1 ♘d7 33 ♘d6! ♖a7 34 ♖b3 f5 35 ♔f1 ♔f6 36 ♖e8 ♘e5 37 ♖b7 ♖xb7 38 ♘xb7 c4 39 ♖c8 c3 40 ♘a5 ♘d3 41 ♘b3 ♗e5 42 ♘c5! ♘xc5 43 ♖xc5 ♗d4 44 ♖c6 a5 45 f4! ♔g6 46 ♔e2 ♔h5 47 ♖c4 ♗f6 48 ♖c7! ♔g6 49 ♔d3 ♗h4 50 ♖xc3 ♗e1 51 ♖c8 ♗b4 52 a4 f6 53 ♖c6 ♔f7 54 ♖b6 ♗e1 55 ♖b7+ ♔g6 56 ♖e7 e5 57 fxe5 fxe5 58 ♖xe5 ♗b4 59 ♖b5 ♗e1 60 ♖b1 ♗f2 61 ♔c4 ♗e3 62 ♖d1 1-0

Game 93
Bacrot-Korchnoi
Albert (match) 1997

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 7 ♕c2 dxc4! 8 e3

8 ♖d1 a6! followed by ...b7-b5 keeps the pawn.

8...c5!



This seems a very precise way to equalise.

9 dxc5 ♕a5 10 ♗xc4 ♕xc5 11 ♘e4 ♕a5+ 12 ♔e2!?

12 ♘fd2 ♗e7 13 ♗b5+ ♘d7 is equal according to Korchnoi.

12...♗e7 13 g4 ♘d7?!

13...♗d7! was better according to Korchnoi, when 14 g5!? (14 a3 ♗c6 15 b4 ♕b6 16 ♘e5 ♘d7 17 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 is equal according to Tsesarsky) 14...hxg5 15 ♖hg1 ♗b5 16 ♘exg5 ♗xc4+ 17 ♕xc4 ♘c6 18 ♖ad1 ♖d8 leads to equality.

14 a3 ♘f6 15 ♘ed2?!

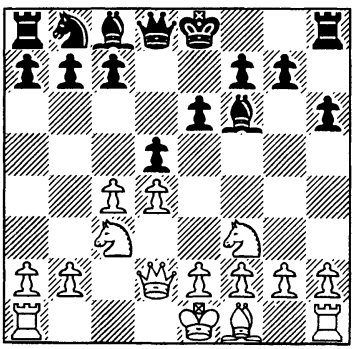
Passive. 15 b4 was better according to Korchnoi.

15...♗d7 16 ♖hg1 ♖c8 17 ♕b3 ♕b6 18 ♕xb6 axb6 19 ♘e5 ♗a4 20 ♖ac1 ♗d6 21 ♘df3 ♔e7 22 h4 ♖hd8 23 g5 ♘d7 24 ♘xd7 ♖xd7 25 ♗d3 ♖dc7 26 ♖xc7+ ♖xc7 27 ♘d4 ♗e5 28 ♖g4 ♗d7 29 ♖e4

f6 30 gxh6 gxh6 31 f4 ♗xd4 32 ♖xd4 ♖c5 33 ♖b4 b5 34 ♔f2 ♔d6 35 ♖d4+ ♔c7 36 ♗e4 ♗c6 37 ♗xc6 ♖c2+ 38 ♔f3 bxc6 39 b4 ♖c3 40 f5 exf5 41 ♔f4 ♖xa3 42 ♔xf5 ♖xe3 43 ♔xf6 ♖c3 44 ♔e5 h5 45 ♖e4 c5 46 ♔d5 cxb4 47 ♖xb4 ♔b6 48 ♔d4 ♖c5 49 ♖b1 ♖c4+ 50 ♔d3 ♖xh4 51 ♔c3 ♖c4+ 52 ♔b3 h4 53 ♖g1 ♖c6 54 ♖g5 ♖h6 0-1

Game 94
I.Sokolov-Van der Sterren
Dutch Ch., Rotterdam 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 7 ♕d2!?



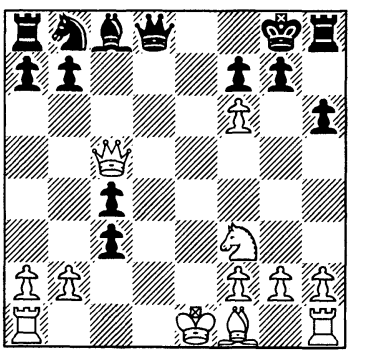
7...dxc4!

Here 7...c5 8 dxc5 dxc4 9 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10 0-0-0+ ♔e7 11 ♘e4 ♗d7 12 ♗c6 13 ♘xf6 gxf6 14 ♗xc4 ♖c8 was almost equal in I.Sokolov-Azmaiparashvili, Antwerp 1998. However, 7...dxc4! is much more active and makes good use of the position of the bishop on f6.

8 e4 c5! 9 d5 exd5 10 e5 d4!?

This is not bad, but in a recent (1998) German Bundesliga game between P.Nikolic and King, Black played much more strongly with 10...♗e7 11 ♘xd5 b5 and after 12 b3 (12 a4 ♗b7 13 ♘xe7 ♕xe7 14 axb5 ♘d7 gives Black good counterplay according to Yusupov, as after 15 ♗xc4 ♗xf3! 16 gxf3 ♘xe5 the double threat of ...♘e5xc4+ and ...♘e5xf3++ wins a piece for Black. 15 0-0-0 ♘b6 16 ♕d6 ♖d8 also doesn't cause Black any problems.) not 12...♗a6 13 bxc4 bxc4 14 ♖d1 ♘c6 15 ♕c3 0-0 16 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 17 ♕xc4 ♕a5+ 18 ♘d2 ♖fe8 19 f4 ♖ab8 20 0-0 which was very nice for White in Nikolic-Yusupov, Linares 1988, but 12...♘c6! 13 bxc4 ♗g4! when suddenly White had very big central problems. In the game, 14 ♗e2? was played when 14...♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 ♘xe5 16 ♘c7+ ♕xc7 17 ♗xa8 0-0 followed by ...♘e5xc4 was overwhelming for Black. 14 ♘xe7 ♕xe7 15 cxb5 ♗xf3 16 gxf3 ♘d4 17 0-0-0 0-0 also does not look so comfortable for White, so 14 ♕c3 is the best way to play, but it isn't wonderful for White.

11 exf6 dxc3 12 ♕e3+ ♔f8 13 ♕xc5+ ♔g8



14 ♗xc4

Instead of this, 14 ♕e7!? ♕xe7 15 dxe7 ♔h7 16 bxc3 ♖e8 17 0-0-0 ♘c6 18 ♗xc4 ♖xe7 19 ♖he1 ♗e6 20 ♗xe6 fxe6 and 14 fxg7 ♔xg7 15 ♕e5+ ♔h7 16 ♕xc3 ♖e8+ 17 ♗e2, meeting 17...♕d3 with 18 ♘d4 ♘c6 19 ♖d1!, are both given as better attempts for the advantage by Ivan Sokolov. In the game Black easily solves his problems but later blunders the game away.

14...cxb2 15 ♖b1 ♘c6 16 fxg7 ♔xg7 17 0-0 ♕f6 18 ♕a3 ♗g4 19 ♘d2 ♖ad8 20 ♖xb2 ♘e5 21 ♕g3 ♔h7 22 ♖b5 ♘xc4 23 ♘e4 ♕g6 24 ♕xg4 ♕xg4 25 ♘f6+ ♔g7 26 ♘xg4 h5?? 27 ♖g5+! ♔f8 28

♘f6 ♖d6 29 ♘xh5 ♖dh6 30 ♘g3 ♖xh2 31 ♖c5 ♘d6 32 ♖d1 ♘e8 33 ♖c8 ♖2h6 34 ♖e1 ♖e6 35 ♖xe6 fxe6 36 ♘e4 ♔f7 37 ♖b8 b6 38 ♖a8 ♖h5 39 ♖xe8 1-0

We now examine the main lines which can arise from both the 5...h6 6 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 7 e3 0-0 and 5...0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 move orders.

Game 95
Gabriel-Bönsch
Bad Homburg 1996

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 7 e3 0-0

Question 7. What should White aim to be doing?

Answer 7. A good question! We first must start by stating a few obvious principles:

1. Black's ultimate idea, as in all QGD lines, is to organise a central break; ...c7-c5 is normal, but as we have seen from Orthodox lines, ...e6-e5 is also quite frequent. This is particularly tempting here as Black's bishop is well-placed on f6 to support ...e6-e5.

2. There are two scenarios for these breaks: Black will either play ...c7-c5 immediately (though then he will have to accept an IQP after c4xd5 and d4xc5) or he will take first on c4 before playing either ...c7-c5 or ...e6-e5.

Question 8. One question, which break should Black be aiming for, ...c7-c5 or ...e6-e5?

Answer 8. It depends very much on the position, of course, but ...c7-c5 is the easiest to achieve (...e6-e5 still requires some preparation) so White should concern himself with this one first.

So White wants to take the joy out of ...c7-c5 for Black, but he also must be careful of when to develop his light-squared bishop.

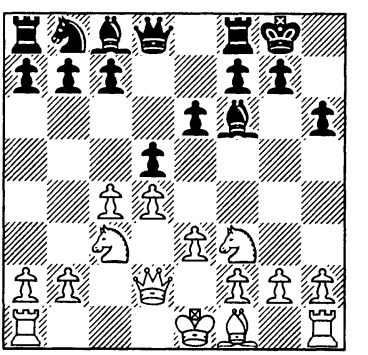
Question 9. What do you mean?

Answer 9. Black may play ...d5xc4 at any moment to prepare one of his central breaks; White doesn't want to waste a tempo playing ♗f1-d3 before moving the bishop again to play ♗d3xc4.

Question 10. Aha, the 'fight for the tempo' again!

Answer 10. So you did read the Orthodox chapter then! This is another example of the interrelations between so many of the QGD lines. Having established these basic principles, we shall now examine White's choices, starting with 8 ♕d2 (8 ♕c2 is the subject of Game 98 and 8 ♖c1 of Games 99 and 100). Instead 8 ♕b3 c6 9 ♖d1 ♘d7 10 ♗d3 ♖b8! 11 ♕c2!? (11 0-0 b5! 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ♖c1 a6 14 ♘e2 ♗b7 15 ♗b1 e5 16 dxe5 ♘xe5 was fine for Black in Piket-Yusupov, Dortmund 1994) 11...♕a5 12 ♘d2 a6 13 ♘b3 ♕d8 14 e4 dxc4 15 ♗xc4 b5 16 ♗e2 e5 was quite unclear in Volkov-Asrian, Minsk 1998.

8 ♕d2



Question 11. What is the idea behind this move?

Answer 11. Let's see how it fits in with our principles:

1. White continues the fight for the tempo: that's good!

2. The fight against Black's central breaks: with 8 ♕d2, White frees d1 for his queen's rook; if Black does accept an IQP, White will be able pressure it with his major pieces extremely quickly. Moreover, White defends his knight on c3.

Question 12. Umm, it seemed to be doing

fine already!

Answer 12. Yes, but after ...c7-c5, d4xc5 ...♗f6xc3+ was always an option, hurting White's queenside structure and removing pressure from d5. Now this no longer has the same effect as White can simply recapture on c3 with the queen.

8 ♕d2 has other dreams moreover... You see that pawn on h6?

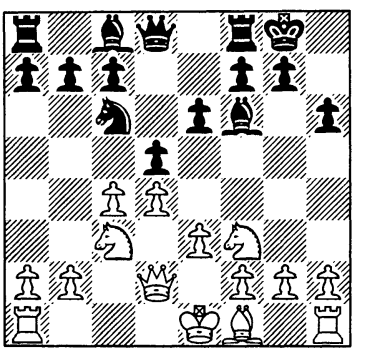
Question 13. What about it?

Answer 13. It is a weakness in Black's kingside. If White were to push his h- and g-pawns and get in g2-g4-g5 then Black will have some problems to contend with.

Question 14. Aha, and White's king...

Answer 14. Could go queenside, thanks to 8 ♕d2!

8...♘c6!?



Question 15. Oh, this looks odd!

Answer 15. Now we should look at this position from Black's side to see the range of his possibilities. As with the Orthodox system, Black's untouched queenside gives him the chance to play a wide variety of queen's pawn structures.

Question 16. I thought this was a QGD!

Answer 16. It is, but that is the beauty of this opening. Nearly all other queen's pawn openings gain a definite character from the start because they all involve the concession of the centre with ...d5xc4 in different settings. As the QGD holds the centre until much later, these possibilities are still viable 10 or 12 moves in.

Question 17. So what can Black do here?

Answer 17. Black's basic aim is to gain space for his pieces - this is the rationale behind his desire for central breaks: by pushing pawns forward and opening lines, Black's pieces gain new avenues and squares. Therefore, the following plans all have some logic:

1. The Tarrasch option: ...c7-c5 without first capturing on c4. This is slightly risky as the resulting Black IQP (after c4xd5 ...e6xd5, d4xc5) will lack the support of a black knight on f6.

2. The Chigorin option: ...♘b8-c6 followed by ...d5xc4 and ...e6-e5. We see this in the game continuation. I like this idea as it makes very active use of the bishop on f6.

3. The QGA option: ...a7-a6, intending to gain queenside space with ...d5xc4 and ...b7-b5 before finally breaking with ...c7-c5 (see Game 96).

4. The Slav option: ...a7-a6, ...c7-c6 and ...b7-b5.

Question 18. This looks very peculiar!

Answer 18. Black takes a slightly different way of solving his central problems; he reasons that any IQP position is unfavourable for him, but neither does he want to concede any central ground by playing ...d5xc4.

Question 19. That sounds like a tricky dilemma: how can he break in the centre then?

Answer 19. Black decides that he cannot do anything in the centre unless he forces White to release the central tension - the conflict between the pawns on c4 and d5. By achieving ...b7-b5, Black challenges the c4-pawn and forces White to make a decision:

1. If White pushes c4-c5, then the pressure is released from the d5-pawn, making ...e6-e5 easier to achieve.

2. If White takes on d5, Black recaptures with the c-pawn - the exchange has freed Black's position and we now have an

Exchange Slav structure where Black is quite happy to have the two bishops.

3. The Semi-Slav option: ...c7-c6, intending ...♘b8-d7 and an eventual ...d5xc4 and ...e6-e5. This is the main plan. The close resemblance between this system and the Moscow variation of the Botvinnik system (1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗xf6 ♕xf6) must also be noted.

4. The QGD option : ...b7-b6 and ...♗c8-b7 with ...d5xc4 at some stage to keep the long diagonal open.

Question 20. And which is best?

Answer 20. Nobody knows! It all depends on the specific circumstances.

9 ♖c1

White waits for ...d5xc4 and places his rook on the soon to be opened c-file. Since Black's knight stands in front of the c7-pawn, that pawn can easily become a target.

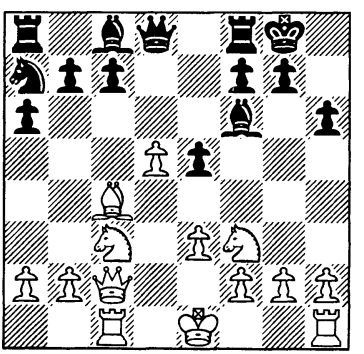
9...a6!

Black also waits.

10 ♗e2

Perhaps 10 b3!?

10...dxc4 11 ♗xc4 e5 12 d5! ♘e7 13 ♕c2!



With these moves, White points to the defects of ...♘b8-c6. The d5-pawn holds back the c7-pawn and White doubles on the c-file against it.

13...♗d7

13...♘b5!? 14 ♘xb5 axb5 15 ♗b3 ♗g4 16 ♘d2 was the game Zso.Polgar-Chiburdanidze, Women's World Championship 1995, when now instead of 16...♖c8? 17 ♕d3 c6 18 d6 ♖e8 19 0-0, Ftacnik recommends 16...c5! 17 dxc6 (17 ♕e4 ♕c8 18 d6 ♖a6! is unclear according to Ftacnik) 17...bxc6 18 ♕e4 ♗d7 with equal chances.

14 0-0 ♘b5 15 ♘e4 ♘d6 16 ♗d3 ♗b5?

A rather passive move: 16...♖c8 is better according to Alterman, though he considers 17 ♘fd2! ♗e7 18 ♕b3 to be slightly better for White.

17 ♖fd1 ♗xd3 18 ♕xd3 ♘xe4 19 ♕xe4 ♕e7 20 ♘d2 ♖fd8 21 ♕c4 c6 22 dxc6 ♖ac8 23 ♕e2 ♖xc6 24 ♖xc6 bxc6 25 ♖c1♕b4 26 ♘c4 a5 27 ♕e1 ♖a8 28 b3 c5 29 ♕xb4 cxb4 30 e4 a4 31 ♔f1 axb3 32 axb3 ♖a2 33 ♖d1 ♖c2 34 ♖d3 ♔f8 35 ♔e1 h5 36 g3 h4 37 ♘e3 ♖b2 38 ♘g4 hxg3 39 hxg3 ♔e7 40 ♘e3 ♔e6 41 ♘f5 ♗e7 42 ♘xg7+ ♔f6 43 ♘f5 ♗c5 44 f3 ♔e6 45 ♔d1 ♗e7 46 f4 f6 47 ♘e3 exf4 48 gxf4 ♗c5 49 ♘f5 ♗e7 50 ♖d5 ♗f8 51 ♘d4+ ♔f7 52 ♖d7+ ♔e8 53 ♖b7 ♗d6 54 e5 fxe5 55 ♘f5 ♗f8 56 fxe5 ♖xb3 57 ♖b8+ ♔f7 58 e6+ ♔f6 59 ♖xf8+ ½-½

Game 96
Gabriel-Lputian
Germany-Armenia match 1996

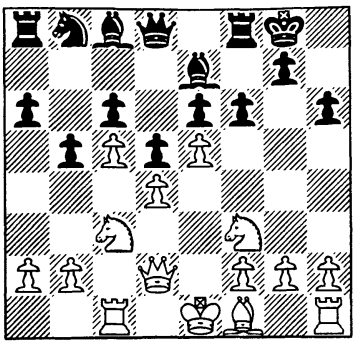
1 d4 e6 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 c4 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 7 e3 0-0 8 ♕d2 a6!? 9 ♖c1

This is a calmer move than 9 0-0-0, when 9...dxc4 10 ♗xc4 b5 (10...♘d7 11 h4 b5 12 ♗d3 ♗b7 13 ♘e4 ♗e7 14 ♗c2 c5! was also fine for Black in Finegold-Lputian, Las Vegas 1994) 11 ♗d3 c5 12 ♘e4 cxd4 13 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 14 ♘xd4 ♗b7 15 f3 ♘d7 was perfectly okay for Black in Kutirov-Azmaiparashvili, Strumica 1995.

9...c6!? 10 e4 b5 11 e5 ♗e7 12 c5 f6

Although White's position seems overwhelming, Black's nibbling at the centre does cause White some problems on the

dark squares.



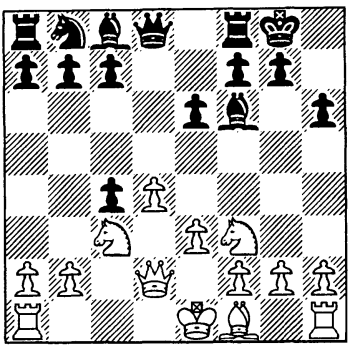
13 ♘e2 ♕e8 14 h4 ♘d7 15 ♕e3 fxe5 16 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 17 dxe5 ♕d8 18 ♘d4 ♕a5+ 19 ♕c3 ♕c7 20 ♘e2 b4 21 ♕e3 ♕a5 22 b3 ♗d7 23 ♖c2 ♗e8 24 h5 d4 25 ♘xd4 ♗xc5 26 ♕e4 ♗xd4 27 ♕xd4 ♖d8 28 ♕c5 ♖d5 29 ♕xa5 ♖xa5 30 ♗c4 ♖xe5+ 31 ♖e2 ♖c5 32 ♖h4 ♗xh5 33 ♖xe6 ♗f7 34 ♖d6 ♗xc4 35 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 36 bxc4 ♖f6 37 ♖d8+ ♖f8 38 ♖d6 ♖f6 39 ♖d8+ ♔f7 40 ♖c8 a5 41 ♖c7+ ♔g6 42 c5 ♔f5 43 ♔e2 g5 44 ♔e3 ♔e5 45 ♖d7 a4 46 f3 h5 47 ♖g7 ♖e6 48 ♔d3 ♔f4 49 g3+ ♔xg3 50 ♖xg5+ ♔h4 51 f4 ♖e1 52 ♖g6 ♖a1 53 ♖xc6 ♖xa2 54 ♖a6 b3 55 c6 ♖a1 56 c7 b2 57 ♖b6 ♖c1 58 ♖xb2 ♖xc7 59 ♔e4 a3 60 ♖h2+ ♔g4 61 ♖g2+ ♔h3 62 ♖a2 ♖c4+ 63 ♔f5 ♖c5+ 64 ♔e4 ♖c3 65 f5 ♔g3 66 f6 ♖f3 67 ♔e5 h4 68 ♔e6 h3 69 f7 h2 70 ♖a1 ½-½

Before moving on, let us take a quick look at some rather offbeat eighth move alternatives for Black.

Game 97
Sadler-Van der Sterren
Linares Zonal 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♗g5 ♗e7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♘f3 h6 7 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 8 ♕d2 dxc4!?

Question 21. Doesn't Black just give up the fight for the tempo like this?



Answer 21. Indeed he does, but by ridding himself of the obligation of defending the d5-pawn, Black gives himself much greater flexibility in his development.

Instead 8...c5!? 9 cxd5 cxd4 10 ♘xd4 exd5 11 ♗b5 ♘c6!? 12 ♗xc6 bxc6 13 ♘xc6 ♕d6 14 ♘d4 ♗a6 offers Black some compensation for the pawn according to Alterman.

9 ♗xc4

Czerwonski-Krivonosov, Lubniewice 1994, saw the even more violent 9 0-0-0, but after 9...c5 10 h4 cxd4 11 exd4 b5! 12 ♘xb5 ♗b7 13 ♘e5 ♘c6 14 f4 a6 15 ♘a3 c3! 16 bxc3 ♘xe5 17 fxe5 ♗xh4 Black had a big advantage.

9...♘d7

In Hillarp Persson-McDonald, Hampstead 1998, Black tried the interesting 9...c5, which seemed sufficient for a draw after 10 dxc5 ♘d7 11 ♘e4 ♗e7 12 ♖d1 ♕c7 13 b4 a5! 14 a3 axb4 15 axb4 b6 16 ♘d6 ♖d8 17 ♘b5 ♕b7 18 ♘d6 ♕c7 19 ♘b5 ♕b7 20 ♘d6.

10 0-0-0!?

Several other moves have also been tried here:

a) 10 0-0 c5 11 ♖fd1 cxd4 12 ♘xd4 ♘b6 13 ♗e2 ♗d7 14 ♖ac1 ♗xd4 15 ♕xd4 ♗c6 was agreed drawn in Bacrot-Dorfman, French Championship, Meribel 1998.

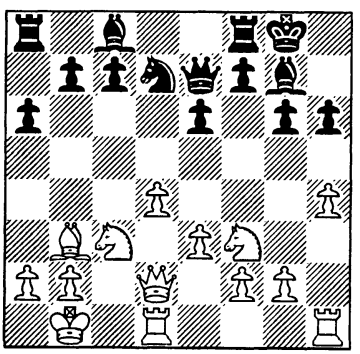
b) Tukmakov-Bender, Zadar 1997, was also equal after 10 ♖d1 c5 11 ♘e4 cxd4 12

exd4 ♘b6 13 ♗b3 ♗d7 14 0-0 ♗c6 15 ♖fe1 ♗d5.

b) 10 h4 is quite a dangerous alternative. After 10...e5 (10...c5 11 g4 [11 0-0-0 cxd4 12 exd4 ♘b6 13 ♗b3 ♗d7 14 g4 ♗c6 15 ♕e3 gives White a dangerous attack according to Van der Sterren] 11...b5!? 12 ♗d3 gives good attacking chances according to Epishin) 11 0-0-0 exd4 12 exd4 ♘b6 13 ♗b3 c6 14 ♕d3 ♘d5 15 ♘e5, as in Epishin-Faibisovic, USSR 1985, 15...♘c3 16 bxc3 ♗xe5 17 dxe5 ♗e6 would have kept Black's disadvantage to a minimum according to Epishin. Maybe Black should try 10...g6 as in the game, since the inclusion of h4-h5 and ...g6-g5 is not clearly to White's advantage.

10...g6! 11 h4 ♗g7 12 ♔b1 a6 13 ♗b3 ♕e7

13...c5 14 d5! is slightly better for White. Black is organising himself very carefully here, and it is difficult for White to get at his opponent's position. In the game, things soon went wrong for me.

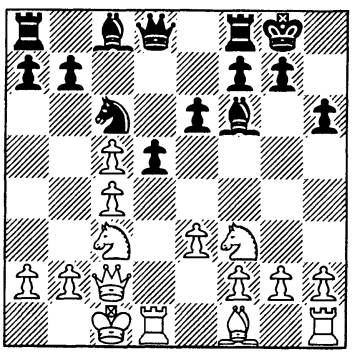


14 ♖c1 b6 15 ♘e2 c5 16 ♘f4 ♗b7 17 d5 exd5 18 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 19 ♕xd5 ♘f6 20 ♕c4 ♕e4+ 21 ♖c2 ♖fd8 22 ♔c1 ♕xc4 23 ♖xc4 ♖ac8 24 ♖d1 ♖xd1+ 25 ♔xd1 b5 26 ♖c2 ♘e4 27 ♔e2 ♖d8 28 ♘e1 c4 29 ♘f3 ♘c5 30 ♘d4 ♗xd4 31 exd4 ♖xd4 32 g3 ♔g7 33 ♖c1 ♔f6 34 b3 ♔e5 35 bxc4 ♖xc4 36 ♖d1 ♖c2+ 37 ♔e3 ♖c3+ 38 ♔e2 ♖c2+ 39 ♔e3 ♖c3+ 40 ♔e2 ♔e4 41 ♖d2 ♖a3 42 h5! gxh5 43 ♘xh5 ♔e5 44 ♘f4 ♘e4 45 ♖d5+ ♔f6 46 ♖d4 ♖xa2+ 47 ♔e3 ♘g5 48 ♘d5+ ♔g7 49 ♖d1 ♘e6 50 g4 a5 51 f4 b4 52 ♖b1 ♖a3+ 53 ♔e4 ♖a2 54 ♔e5 ♖e2+ 55 ♔d6 ♖d2 56 ♔c6 b3 57 f5 ♘d4+ 58 ♔c5 b2 59 ♘c3 ♘f3 60 ♘a4 ♘e5 61 ♔b5 0-1

Game 98
Van Wely-Vaganian
Yerevan Olympiad 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 7 e3 0-0 8 ♕c2 c5 9 dxc5 ♘c6 10 0-0-0!?

Very sharp. Instead 10 cxd5 exd5 11 0-0-0 ♗e6 12 ♘d4 ♖c8 13 ♗b5 ♘e7! 14 ♘b3 b6 15 ♗a6 ♖b8!? (15...♖c6 16 ♗b5 ♖c8 17 ♗a6 is just a draw by repetition) 16 ♘e4 ♗e5 17 f4 ♕c7 and now 18 ♘c3 ♗xc3 19 ♕xc3 ♕c6 20 ♘d4 ♕xc5 is unclear according to Van Wely.



10...♘b4 11 ♕a4 a5!?

11...♗xc3 12 bxc3 ♘a6 13 cxd5 exd5 14 ♗xa6 bxa6 15 c4 is clearly better for White (Van Wely).

12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♘d4 ♗g4 14 ♗e2 ♗xe2?!

Black should have gone in for 14...♗xd4! 15 ♖xd4 (15 ♗xg4!? ♗xc3 16 bxc3 ♘a6 17 ♕d4 ♕c7 18 ♗f3 ♘xc5 19 ♗xd5 gives Black reasonable chances for the pawn according to Van Wely) 15...♗xe2 16 ♘xe2

♕e7, when both 17 ♔b1 ♕xc5 18 ♖c1 ♕d6 19 ♘f4 and 17 a3 ♕xc5+ 18 ♘c3 are unclear according to Van Wely.

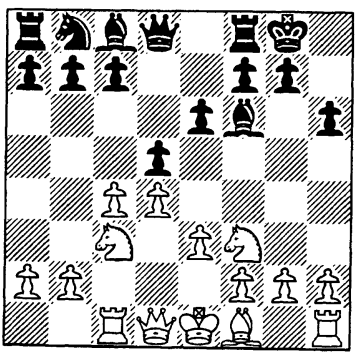
15 ♘dxe2! ♕e7 16 a3 ♕xc5 17 ♕b5 ♘a2+ 18 ♔b1 ♘xc3+ 19 ♘xc3 ♕c6 20 ♕xd5 ♕a6 21 ♕d6 ♗xc3 22 ♕xa6 ♖xa6 23 bxc3

Now White stands clearly better.

23...♖c8 24 ♖d3 ♖g6 25 g3 ♖gc6 26 ♔b2 g5 27 ♖c1 ♔g7 28 ♖d5 ♖c5 29 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 30 ♖d1 ♖f5 31 f4 gxf4 32 exf4 ♖h5 33 ♖d2 ♔f6 34 ♔b3 ♔e6 35 c4 ♖c5 36 a4 b6 37 ♔c3 ♖h5 38 ♖b2 ♔d7 39 ♖xb6 ♖xh2 40 c5 h5 41 ♔c4 ♖g2 42 ♖d6+ ♔c7 43 ♖h6 ♖xg3 44 ♖xh5 ♖a3 45 ♖f5 ♖xa4+ 46 ♔d5 ♖a1 47 ♖xf7+ ♔b8 48 ♖f8+ ♔c7 49 f5 ♖d1+ 50 ♔c4 ♖c1+ 51 ♔b5 ♖b1+ 52 ♔xa5 ♔c6 53 f6 1-0

Game 99
Gligoric-Vaganian
Zonal 1998

1 d4 e6 2 c4 d5 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 7 e3 0-0 8 ♖c1



The most natural move for White in the fight for a tempo. White defends his knight on c3 and brings his rook to the c-file in order to discourage ...c7-c5.

8...a6

The QGA plan! The alternative 8...c6 is considered in the next main game.

9 a3!?

White has a wide choice here:

a) The naïve 9 ♗d3, as in Pohl-Vaganian, German Bundesliga 1993, allows simply 9...dxc4 10 ♗xc4 ♘d7 11 0-0 b5 12 ♗d3 c5 13 ♘e4 cxd4 14 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 15 ♘xd4 ♗b7 with equality. In subsequent games White has preferred to keep on fighting for the tempo.

b) 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♗d3 c6 11 h3 ♘d7 12 0-0 ♗e7! 13 a3 ♗d6 14 ♖e1 ♘f6 (14...♖e8!?) was fine for Black in Bacrot-Giorgadze, World Championship 1997.

c) I.Sokolov-Short, Groningen 1996, saw 9 ♕c2 c6 10 ♗d3 b5! (switching to the Slav plan) 11 c5 ♘d7 12 e4 e5! 13 exd5 exd4 and now, instead of 14 ♘e2? ♕a5+ 15 ♕d2 b4! which was clearly better for Black, Ivan Sokolov gives 14 ♘e2 as unclear.

9...c6 10 ♗d3 ♘d7 11 0-0 b5 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 e4

Oll-King, London Lloyds Bank 1994, saw the quieter 13 ♗b1 g6 14 ♘e2 ♘b6 15 ♘f4 ♘c4 16 a4 bxa4 17 ♕xa4 ♗d7 18 ♕c2 ♕e7 with a reasonable position for Black. The text also holds few fears for Black.

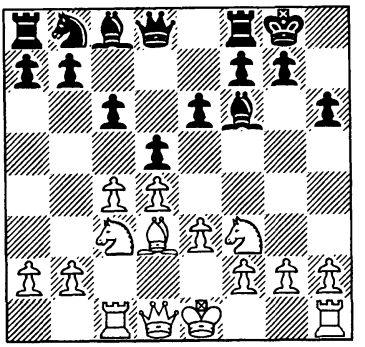
13...dxe4 14 ♗xe4 ♖b8 15 ♕e2 b4 16 axb4 ♖xb4 17 ♘a2 ♖b8 18 ♖fd1 ♕b6 19 ♖c2 ♖d8 20 ♘c3 a5 21 ♖cd2 ♗a6 22 ♕e3 ♖bc8 23 ♗b1 ♗b7 24 ♗e4 ♗a6 25 ♗b1 ♗c4 26 h4 ♗b3 27 ♖e1 ♘f8 28 ♗a2 ♗xa2 29 ♘xa2 ♘g6 30 g3 ♘e7 31 g4 h5 32 ♕e4 hxg4 33 ♕xg4 ♘f5 34 d5 ♘h6 35 ♕h3 exd5 36 ♖xd5 ♕xb2 37 ♖xa5 ♖c4 38 ♕f1 ♖g4+ 39 ♔h1 ♕b7 40 ♕e2 ♖f4 41 ♖a3 ♘f5 42 ♔g1 ♖g4+ 43 ♔f1 ♘d4 44 ♕d3 ♖f4 0-1

Game 100
Gelfand-Kramnik
Dortmund 1997

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 8 ♖c1 c6

Black defends his d5-pawn in order to allow the queen's knight to be developed to d7.

9 ♗d3



As the ...c7-c5 central break will now take two moves, White abandons the fight for the tempo: he will regain it whenever Black plays ...c6-c5.

9...♘d7 10 0-0 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 e5!

So Black aims for ...e6-e5 instead of ...c6-c5!

12 h3 exd4 13 exd4 ♘b6 14 ♗b3 ♖e8 15 ♖e1 ♗f5

Siegel successfully neutralised Bacrot in the French Team Championships 1998 after 15...♖xe1+!? 16 ♕xe1 ♗f5 17 g4 ♗d3 18 ♘e5 ♗xe5 19 dxe5 c5 20 ♕e3 c4 21 ♗d1 ♕e7 22 ♗e2 ♗xe2 23 ♕xe2 ♖e8 24 ♖e1 ½-½.

16 g4

Portisch-Van der Sterren, Ter Apel 1994, was also fine for Black after 16 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 17 ♕d2 ♕d7 18 ♖e1 a5 19 a3 ♖e8 20 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 21 ♕f4 ♗e6 22 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 23 ♕b8+ ♕c8 24 ♕a7 ♘c4.

16...♗e6 17 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 18 ♖xe6 fxe6 19 ♕e2 ♕e7

The position is equal.

20 ♖e1 ♖e8 21 ♕c2 ♕f7 22 ♘e4 ♖d8 23 ♘c5 ♗xd4 24 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 25 ♘xe6 ♖d6 26 ♕e4 ♖d5 27 f4 ♘d7 28 ♘d8 ♕f6 29 ♕e8+ ♔h7 30 ♕e4+ ♔g8 31 ♕e8+ ♔h7 32 ♕e4+ ½-½

We shall now examine the 5...0-0 move order in more detail by looking at the interesting attempts 6 ♕c2!? and 6 ♖c1.

Game 101
Kramnik-Short
Dortmund 1995

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 0-0 6 ♕c2!?

6 ♖c1 h6 7 ♗h4 transposes to Korchnoi-Short, World Championship 1997, when 7...dxc4! 8 e3 c5 9 ♗xc4 cxd4 10 ♘xd4 ♗d7 11 ♗g3 (11 0-0 ♘c6 12 ♘b3 a6 13 ♗e2 ♘d5 14 ♗g3 ♘xc3 15 ♖xc3 ♘b4 16 ♕b1 ♕b6 17 ♖cc1 ♘d5 18 e4 ♘f6 was equal in Ivanchuk-Khuzman, Lvov 1988, whereas Kharitonov-Beliavsky, USSR Championship 1988, was also level after 12 ♘f3 ♕b6! 13 ♘a4 ♕c7 14 ♗e2 ♖fd8 15 a3 ♗e8 16 ♕c2 ♖ac8) 11...♘c6 12 ♘db5 e5!? (12...a6 13 ♘d6 b5 14 ♗e2 ♕b6 15 a4 b4 was fine for Black in Piket-Van der Sterren, Antwerp 1997) 13 a4 a6 14 ♘a3 ♗xa3 15 bxa3 ♕e7 16 ♗h4 g5 17 ♗g3 ♗e6 18 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 was pleasant for Black.

6...h6 7 ♗xf6!

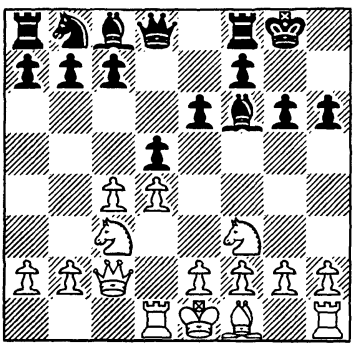
Here 7 ♗h4 b6! 8 ♗xf6 (8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 10 ♘xd5 exd5 11 ♖c1 ♗a6 12 ♕xc7 ♘d7 gives Black good counterplay for the pawn) 8...♗xf6 9 e4 ♘c6! 10 0-0-0 dxe4!? (10...dxc4 11 e5 ♗e7 12 ♗c4 ♗b7 13 a3 is unclear according to Hjartarson) 11 ♕xe4 ♗b7 12 ♗d3 g6 13 h4 ♖b8 14 ♕g4 ♗g7 was unclear in Ree-Hjartarson, Reykjavik 1984.

7...♗xf6 8 ♖d1 g6!?

8...c6 9 e4! dxe4 10 ♕xe4 intending ♗f1-d3 and h4-h5 shows the point of White's idea, but 8...c5!? 9 dxc5 ♕a5 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♕d2 ♗xc3 12 ♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 13 bxc3 ♘a6!? (13...♗e6 14 ♘d4 ♖c8 15 e4 dxe4 16 ♘xe6 fxe6 17 ♗c4 ♔f7 18 ♖d4 ♖xc5 19 ♖xe4 ♖c6 20 f4 ♔f6 21 0-0 ♘d7 22 g4 ♘c5 was agreed drawn in Li Wenliang-Liang Jinrong, Beijing 1996) 14 e3 ♘xc5 15 ♖xd5 b6 16 ♖d4 ♗b7 17 ♗c4 ♖ac8 18 ♘e5 ♗xg2 19 ♖g1 ♗h3 was absolutely fine for Black in San Segundo-Van der Sterren, Linares Zonal 1995. Instead of 18 ♘e5, 18 0-0 ♘e4 19 ♘e5 has been

recommended, but 18...♖c5! looks much stronger with reasonable play for Black.

The game leads to a position reminiscent of a Semi-Slav Moscow system, but with a few less tempi for Black.



9 e3

9 e4 dxe4 10 ♘xe4 ♗g7 11 ♗e2 ♘c6! is fine for Black according to Kramnik.

9...c6?! 10 ♗d3 dxc4

10...♘d7 11 0-0 a6 is slightly better for White according to Kramnik.

11 ♗xc4 ♘d7 12 h4!? ♗g7 13 a3 ♕e7 14 ♗a2 b6 15 ♗b1 h5 16 0-0 ♗b7 17 ♘g5 ♖fd8 18 ♗a2 ♘f6 19 e4 ♘g4 20 e5 ♖d7? 21 ♘e2! ♖ad8 22 ♗xe6! fxe6 23 ♕xg6 ♘xe5 24 ♕h7+ ♔f8 25 ♘f4 1-0

And finally a look at the accelerated version of this idea.

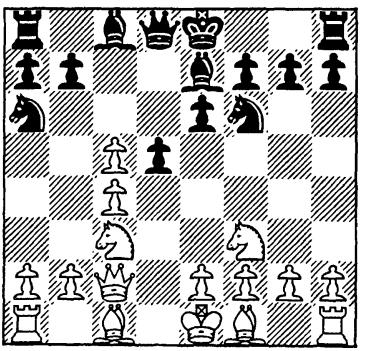
Game 102
Ehlvest-Lputian
Yerevan 1996

1 d4 e6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 c4 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♕c2 c5!?

Kramnik-Kir.Georgiev, Yerevan Olympiad 1996, saw 5...dxc4 6 e4 ♘c6 7 e5 ♘b4 8 ♕b1 ♘fd5 9 ♗xc4 c5! (9...♘b6 10 ♗e2 ♗d7 11 0-0 ♗c6 12 a3 ♘4d5 13 ♘e4 with an edge in Ehlvest-Yusupov, Vienna 1996) 10 dxc5 ♕a5 11 0-0 ♕xc5 12 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 13 ♕e4 ♗d7 when 14 ♕g4! ♔f8 (14...0-0-0 15 ♘g5!) 15 ♗d2 h5 16 ♕e4 is slightly better for White according to Georgiev.

5...0-0 6 ♗g5 transposes to Game 100 above. White can try simply to transpose into an Exchange variation with 6 cxd5 exd5 7 ♗g5, but 6...♘xd5 7 ♗d2 b6 8 g3 ♗b7 9 ♗g2 ♘d7 10 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 11 e4 ♗b7 12 0-0 c5 13 ♗c3 cxd4 14 ♘xd4 a6 15 ♖fd1 ♕c7 was equal in Oll-Liang Jinrong, Beijing 1997.

6 dxc5 ♘a6



7 cxd5

Two other moves have also been tried:

a) Kramnik-Short, Novgorod 1996, continued 7 g3 0-0 8 ♗g2 dxc4 9 0-0 ♕a5 10 ♘e4 ♘xc5 11 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 12 ♘g5 ♗xg5 13 ♗xg5 ♘a4 14 ♗d2 ♕b5 15 ♖fc1 ♕xb2 16 ♕xb2 ♘xb2 with an unclear position.

b) Eingorn-Beliavsky, Sochi 1986, saw 7 ♗g5 ♕a5 8 e3 ♘xc5 9 ♘d2 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 (10 ♘xc4 ♘d3+ 11 ♗xd3 ♕xg5 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♘e4 and now 13...♕h5 would have been fine for Black in Eingorn-Smyslov, Sochi 1986) 10...0-0 11 ♗h4?! (11 ♗f4 ♘h5 12 ♗g3, intending a2-a3 and b2-b4 is White's best according to Eingorn, but it doesn't look anything special) 11...♗d7 with good chances for Black.

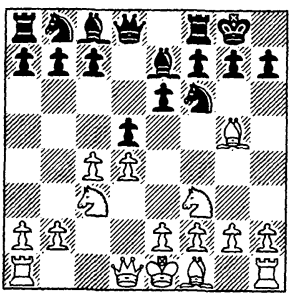
7...♘xd5 8 e4 ♘db4 9 ♕a4+ ♗d7 10 ♕d1 ♘xc5 11 a3 ♘c6 12 ♗e3 a5 13 ♗b5 0-0 14 0-0 ♕c7

Here Black has equalised.

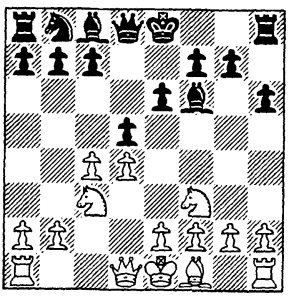
15 ♖c1 ♖fd8 16 ♕e2 ♘e5 17 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 18 f4 ♕b8 19 e5 b6 20 b4 axb4 21 axb4 ♗xb5 22 ♘xb5 ♘a6 23 ♖c6 ½-½

Summary
For the moment, the ♗xf6 ideas do not seem anything special for White. For Black, I prefer the immediate 5...h6 move order.

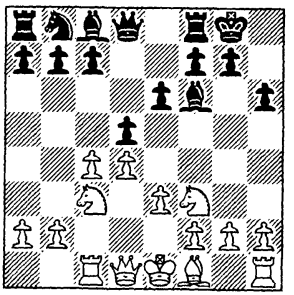
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5
5 ♕c2 – *Game 102*
5...h6
5...0-0 *(D)*
6 e3 h6 7 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 – *Games 95-100* (see below)
6 ♕c2 – *Game 101*
6 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 *(D)* **7 e3**
7 ♕b3 – *Game 92*
7 ♕c2 – *Game 93*
7 ♕d2 – *Game 94*
7...0-0 8 ♕d2
8 ♕c2 – *Game 98*
8 ♖c1 *(D)*
8...a6 – *Game 99*
8...c6 – *Game 100*
8...♘c6
8...a6 – *Game 96*
8...dxc4 – *Game 97*
9 ♖c1 – *Game 95*



5...0-0



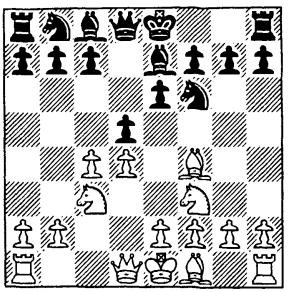
6...♗xf6



8 ♖c1

CHAPTER TEN

5 ♗f4 Variation



1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 ♗f4

Question 1. What is the point of this move?

Answer 1. White will soon wish to play e2-e3 in order to develop his light-squared bishop and complete his kingside development. In contrast to Black, he wishes to ensure that his other bishop – the bishop on the same colour as his central pawn chain – remains active, and outside the pawn chain. Clearly therefore, White has a choice between only two possible squares: f4 and g5.

Question 2. But why put the bishop on f4 rather than g5?

Answer 2. On g5, the bishop had two major accomplishments:

1. By attacking the knight on f6, it weakened Black's protection of his d5-pawn.

2. It gave White the opportunity to divert the black bishop on e7 from the f8-a3 diagonal by playing ♗g5xf6.

Both these points had the effect of making it harder for Black to achieve the desired central freeing break ...c7-c5. However, the presence of the bishop on g5 allowed Black new resources based on exchanging pieces in order to free his position, in particular the patent ...♘f6-e4! idea. In order to avoid the exchange of pieces, White was often forced to give up the bishop pair.

Question 3. Aha, so by putting the bishop on f4...

Answer 3. ...White avoids all these freeing ideas with ...♘f6-e4! From this point of view, White makes sure that his opponent will have to work a lot harder to make space in his position. It also becomes much harder for Black to net the bishop pair. Note also the number of times that White retreats his bishop to f4 in so many lines – the Exchange variation with 10 h3 and 11 ♗f4 being the most obvious example.

Question 4. Wow, that sounds perfect!

Answer 4. Well, unfortunately not. Prevention in the opening is always like trying to squash jelly – there's always one part that seems to squirm away from you!

Question 5. And in this case...

Answer 5. Well, the problem in this case is that from f4, the bishop does not put any pressure on Black's centre. And since this pressure is missing, this makes it child's play for Black to achieve his desired ...c7-c5 freeing central break.

Question 6. Doesn't this make Black's equalising task easier?

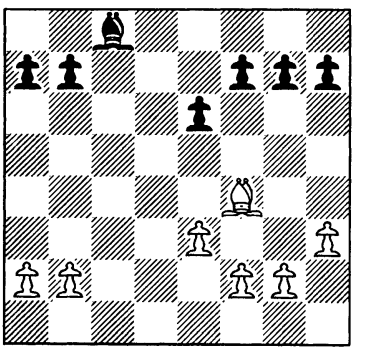
Answer 6. In a way. The whole variation is obviously a lot less complicated strategically for Black than the 5 ♗g5 lines – he no longer has to worry exactly how he's going to get in

his break - but White has a number of ingenious resources to keep on throwing problems at his opponent.

Question 7. Such as...?

Answer 7. Two kinds of things generally:

1. The symmetrical structure where Black has played ...c7-c5, and White has taken on c5 and Black has taken on c4.



On a full board of pieces, the advantage of the bishop on f4 against the bishop on c8 is often enough to guarantee White a slight pull in these symmetrical positions.

Question 8. Why?

Answer 8. Mainly because the bishop on f4 takes away the natural c7-square from the black queen. Since White has not allowed his opponent to exchange the dark-squared bishops and free space for his queen, the queen does not have e7 available either, and with a white rook coming to the open d-file, this can prove a little troublesome for Black.

2. Wing pawn advances. In this system, White is always flying down the wings with such ideas as a2-a3 and b2-b4 or g2-g4-g5 and h2-h4.

So enough talking, let's get down to some concrete lines!

Game 103
Sakaev-Beliavsky
European Club Cup 1999

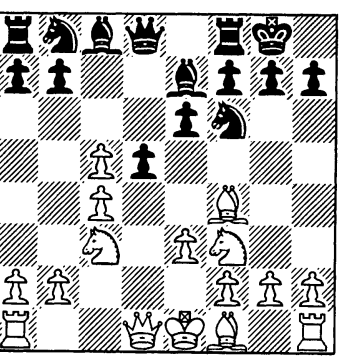
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗f4 0-0

Attention should be given here to Crouch's 5...dxc4!? with the idea of 6 e4 (6 e3 ♘d5! 7 ♗xc4 ♘xf4 8 exf4 ♘c6! is fine for Black according to Crouch, who suggests 6 ♕a4+!? as White's best try for an advantage) 6...b5! 7 ♘xb5 ♗b4+ 8 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 9 ♘xd2 a6 10 ♘c3 ♕xd4 11 ♘xc4 ♕xd1+ 12 ♖xd1 ♘c6 with maybe a slightly better ending for White according to Crouch, but Black has counter-chances.

6 e3 c5

Black achieves his natural freeing break. Instead 6...♘bd7!? is a favourite of Spassky's which he has played with some success: 7 c5 (alternatively, 7 ♕c2 c5 8 dxc5 ♘xc5 9 ♗e2 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 a6 11 a4 ♗d7 12 0-0 ♖c8 13 a5 and now 13...b5 14 axb6 ♕xb6 would have led to equality according to Sokolov in Van Wely-I.Sokolov, Elista Olympiad 1998; 7 cxd5 ♘xd5 8 ♘xd5 exd5 9 ♗d3 ♗b4+ 10 ♘d2 ♘f6 11 0-0 ♗d6 12 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 13 ♕b3 ♖e8 14 ♖fc1 c6 was equal in C.Hansen-Spassky, Malmo 1998) 7...c6 8 ♗d3 b6 9 b4 a5 10 a3 ♗a6 11 b5 cxb5 12 c6 ♕c8 13 ♖c1 ♕xc6 14 ♘e2 ♘c5! 15 dxc5 bxc5 was very good for Black in I.Sokolov-Spassky, Malmo 1998.

7 dxc5!



Question 9. It looks a little odd for White to be giving up the centre like this.

Answer 9. First of all, this isn't a bad move in general tempo terms, as Black's bishop is

forced to recapture on c5. Black has therefore spent two moves getting his bishop to the c5-square, so White has won this little version of the battle for the tempo!

Secondly, capturing on c5 has two effects:

1. It opens up the d-file against Black's d5-pawn – White would now like to bring the queen's rook to d1 to put pressure against it.

2. By removing the c5-pawn, White frees any obstacle to gaining queenside space – a2-a3 and b2-b4 will now be possible, expanding White's position while gaining a further tempo on Black's dark-squared bishop.

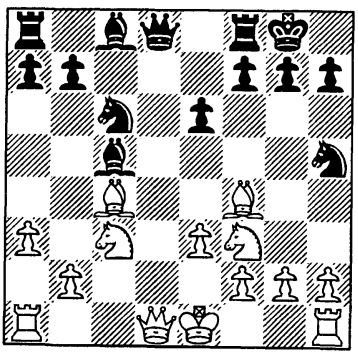
7...♗xc5 8 a3 ♘c6

Here White has a wide choice. 9 b4 (Games 104 and 105), 9 ♖c1 (Games 106 and 107) and 9 ♕c2 (Games 108-110) are all very popular, but first we shall deal with the quiet 9 ♗e2.

9 ♗e2 dxc4!

A good moment to play this move, regaining the tempo in this mirror-image battle!

10 ♗xc4 ♘h5!



Question 10. This looks sneaky!

Answer 10. White's dark-squared bishop is never safe in the QGD! If Black can gain the bishop pair, then he even has chances to be better in the resulting symmetrical position. This exchange is particularly desirable here in view of the cramping influence that the bishop on f4 has on Black's queenside.

11 ♗g5

11 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 12 ♗c7!? is White's other attempt for an advantage. After 12...♖d7 13 ♗e5 b6 (alternatively, 13...♘xe5 14 ♘xe5 ♖d8 15 0-0 [15 ♗e2 ♘f6 16 ♗f3 ♖b8 17 ♔e2 is slightly better for White according to Dautov] 15...♘f6 16 ♖fd1 ♗d7 17 ♘xd7 ♖xd7 18 ♖xd7 ♘xd7 19 ♖d1 ♘f6 20 ♔f1 was agreed drawn in Topalov-Gelfand, Vienna 1996; while 13...♖d8 14 ♔e2 ♗d7 15 ♖hd1 ♘xe5 16 ♘xe5 ♗e8 is another equaliser according to Beliavsky) 14 ♘e4 ♗e7 (14...♘xe5 15 ♘xe5 ♖c7 16 ♗e2 and now 16...♗b7! 17 ♘xc5 ♖xc5 18 ♘d3 ♖d5 19 ♗f3 ♖xd3 20 ♗xb7 ♖ad8 is fine for Black according to Dautov) 15 ♗c3 ♗b7 16 ♗e2 ♖ad8 17 0-0 ♘a5 18 ♘ed2 ♘c6 19 ♘e4 ♘a5 20 ♘ed2 was agreed drawn in Lobron-Lutz, Nussloch 1996.

11...♗e7 12 h4!?

12 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 13 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 was nothing for White in M.Gurevich-Marciano, Belfort 1997.

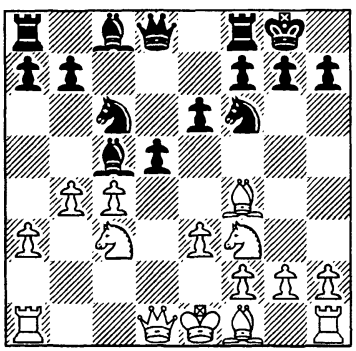
12...f6! 13 ♗f4 ♘xf4 14 exf4 ♕c7 15 g3 ♘e5!

Now Black stands a little better but White manages to hold the game.

16 ♗e2 ♖d8 17 ♕c2 ♘xf3+ 18 ♗xf3 ♖b8 19 0-0 b5 20 ♖ac1 ♗f8 21 ♖fe1 b4 22 axb4 ♖xb4 23 ♘a2 ♕xc2 24 ♖xc2 ♖b6 25 ♔g2 ♗d7 26 ♖d2 ♖d6 27 ♖xd6 ♗xd6 28 ♖d1 ♗e7 29 ♘c3 ♔f8 30 ♖d4 ♔e8 31 ♘e4 ♗b5 32 ♗h5+ ♔f8 33 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 34 ♘c3 ♗d7 35 ♗e2 ♔e7 36 ♗c4 ♔d6 37 ♘e4+ ♔c6 38 ♔f3 h6 39 ♔e2 ♗b6 40 b4 ♗c8 41 ♘c3 ♔d6 42 ♘e4+ ♔d7 43 ♗b5+ ♔c7 44 ♗c4 ♗b7 45 ♘c3 ♔d6 46 ♘b5+ ♔d7 47 ♘c3 ♗c6 48 ♘b5 ♗d5 49 ♗d3 ♗b3 50 ♘c3 ♔d6 51 ♘e4+ ♔c6 52 ♘c3 ♔d6 53 ♘e4+ ♔e7 54 ♘c3 f5 55 ♘b5 g6 56 ♘a3 ♗d5 57 ♘b5 ♔f6 58 ♘d6 e5 59 fxe5+ ♔xe5 60 ♘c4+ ♔d4 61 ♘xb6 axb6 62 ♔d2 ♗e4 63 ♗e2 g5 64 hxg5 hxg5 65 ♗b5 f4 66 gxf4 gxf4 67 ♗e2 ♗d5 68 ♗d3 ♗c4 69 ♗c2 ♗b5 70 ♗b3 ♗c6 71 ♗a2 ½-½

Game 104
Krasenkov-Karpov
Polanica Zdroj 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗f4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 a3 ♘c6 9 b4



A very simple and thematic system. White plays for a small edge based on his queenside space and the isolated queen's pawn that he will create in Black's position.

9...♗e7 10 cxd5 ♘xd5

The other recapture 10...exd5!? is the subject of the next main game.

11 ♘xd5 exd5 12 ♗d3 ♗f6 13 ♖c1 ♗g4!

13...a6 had been thought necessary to prevent b4-b5, when 14 0-0 ♗e6 transposes to the game M.Gurevich-Peelen. Holland 1998, in which the very typical manoeuvre 15 ♖c5! g6 16 ♕b1 ♕e7 17 ♖fc1 ♖fd8 18 h3 ♔g7 19 a4! led to a considerable advantage for White.

14 0-0

14 b5 ♕a5+ 15 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 16 ♔xd2 ♘a5 gives Black sufficient counterplay according to Krasenkov.

14...♕e7 15 h3 ♗xf3 16 ♕xf3 ♖fd8 17 ♖fd1

Instead Van Wely-Van der Sterren, Andorra Zonal 1998, saw 17 ♖c5 a5 18 ♗b5 axb4 19 axb4 ♘xb4 20 ♖c7 ♕e6 21 ♖xb7 ♘a2 22 ♗c7 ♖dc8 23 ♕g4 ♕xg4 24 hxg4 ♘c3 which should be fine for Black.

17...g6

17...♗b2 18 ♖c2 ♗xa3 19 b5 ♘e5 20 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 21 ♕h5+ ♔g8 22 ♗xe5 is clearly better for White according to Krasenkov.

18 ♗b1 ♘e5?!

Krasenkov suggests that 18...♗b2! 19 ♖c2 ♗xa3 20 b5 ♘e5 21 ♗xe5 ♕xe5 22 ♗a2 ♕e7 23 ♗xd5 ♖d7 would have given White only a negligible advantage, although White did manage to win from this position in the recent game Nielsen-Van der Sterren, German Bundesliga 1998.

19 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 20 ♗a2 a5 21 ♗xd5 ♖d7 22 ♖c4 axb4 23 axb4 ♔g7 24 b5 ♖ad8 25 e4 h5 26 ♕e3 ♕f6 27 g3 h4 28 ♖f1 hxg3 29 f4 ♗c7 30 ♕xg3 ♕b6+ 31 ♔g2 ♕f6 32 ♕c3 ♕xc3 33 ♖xc3 ♗b6 34 ♖fc1 ♖a8 35 ♔f3 ♖a5 36 ♖b1 ♖a4 37 h4 f5 38 ♖d3 fxe4+ 39 ♗xe4 ♖xd3+ 40 ♗xd3 ♗c7 41 ♗e4 ♖a3+ 42 ♔g4 ♖a4 43 ♖d1 ♖c4 44 ♖d7+ ♔f8 45 ♗xg6 ♖xf4+ 46 ♔g5 ♖c4 47 h5 ♗f4+ 48 ♔f6 ♖c8 49 h6 ♔g8 50 ♗f5 ♖e8 51 ♗e6+ ♔h8 52 ♗c4 1-0

Game 105
Topalov-Yusupov
Elista Olympiad 1998

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗f4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 a3 ♘c6 9 b4 ♗e7 10 cxd5 exd5!?

It is normally considered best for Black to take the opportunity to free his position by exchanging a pair of knights while he can. With this move, however, Black intends to target the white queenside with ...a7-a5. After b4-b5 in reply, we have a typical IQP structure where White is left with an unsettled knight on the semi-open c-file and no square on b5 to go to.

11 ♗e2 ♗e6 12 ♘d4 ♖c8

Instead Golod-Lputian, European Club

Cup 1999, saw Black implement his idea earlier with 12...a5 13 ♘xe6 fxe6 14 b5 ♘b8 15 ♗g4 ♘xg4 16 ♕xg4 ♖f6 17 0-0 ♘d7 18 ♖fd1 ♘b6 19 ♘e2 ♖g6 20 ♕h3 ♗d6 21 e4 when a draw was agreed. Black's position looks very rickety to me.

13 0-0 a5 14 ♘xc6! ♖xc6 15 ♕d4!

By maintaining the pawn on b4, White maintains a stable advantage.

15...axb4 16 axb4 ♗d6 17 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 18 h3 ♕c7 19 ♘b5 ♕e7 20 ♕f4 ♘e4 21 ♘d4 ♖b6 22 b5 h6 23 ♕e5 ♕d6 24 ♕xd6 ♘xd6 25 ♖fc1 ♖d8 26 f3 ♔f8 27 ♔f2 ♔e7 28 ♗d3 ♖c8 29 ♔e2 ♗d7 30 ♖xc8 ♘xc8 31 ♔d2 g6 32 ♔c3 ♖d6 33 ♘e2 ♖e6 34 ♔d4 ♔d6 35 ♘c3 ♘b6 36 ♖c1 ♖e8 37 e4 ♗e6 38 e5+ ♔d7 39 f4 h5 40 ♖a1 ♖c8 41 h4 ♖c7 42 g3 ♖c8 43 ♘d1 ♘c4 44 ♖a2 ♔c7 45 ♘c3 ♖d8 46 ♘a4 ♖a8 47 ♘c3 ♖d8 48 ♖c2 ♔b6 49 ♖c1 ♔a5 50 ♖a1+ ♔b6 51 ♗e2 ♔c7 52 ♖b1 ♘d2 53 ♖b2 ♘c4 54 ♖b1 ♘d2 55 b6+ ♔c6 56 ♖b4 ♘c4 57 ♘a4 ♖a8 58 ♗f3 ♘d2 59 ♗d1 ♘c4 60 ♗f3 ♘d2 61 ♗d1 ♘c4 ½-½

Game 106
Dreev-Short
Linares 1995

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗f4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 a3 ♘c6 9 ♖c1 a6!?

Black's alternatives here are considered in the next main game.

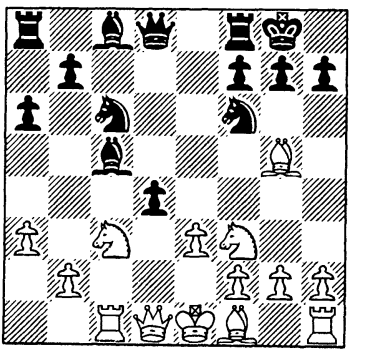
10 cxd5

10 b4 seems the best try: after 10...♗e7 (10...♗a7!? was tried in the recent rapidplay game Gelfand-Topalov, Monaco 1999) 11 cxd5 exd5, we have a position very similar to the 9 b4 line except that White has played the slightly superfluous ♖a1-c1, which makes ...a6-a5 plans much more tempting for Black. Savchenko-Sturua, Berlin 1998, was fairly equal after 12 ♗e2 ♗e6 13 0-0 ♘h5 (13...a5!?) 14 ♗e5 ♘xe5 15 ♘xe5 ♘f6 16 ♕d4 ♗d6.

10...exd5 11 ♗g5?!

Too ambitious. Instead 11 b4 ♗a7 12 ♗e2 d4 13 exd4 ♘xd4 14 ♘xd4 ♕xd4 was equal in Kramnik-Ivanchuk, PCA rapidplay 1994, as was 11 ♗d3 ♗g4! 12 0-0 d4 13 ♘e2 ♗a7 14 ♘fxd4 ♗xd4 15 exd4 draw agreed as in Horvath-Lutz, Elista Olympiad 1998.

11...d4!



12 ♘b5?!

12 ♘e4 ♕a5+ 13 b4 ♘xb4 14 axb4 ♗xb4+ 15 ♘ed2 ♘e4 16 ♗f4 dxe3 17 ♗xe3 ♖d8 and 12 ♗xf6 gxf613 ♘e4 ♗b6 both leave Black with a powerful initiative according to Ftacnik.

12...dxe3! 13 ♕xd8

13 ♖xc5 exf2+ 14 ♔e2 ♕e7+ wins.

13...exf2+ 14 ♔e2 ♖xd8 15 ♗xf6 ♖e8+ 16 ♔d1 gxf6 17 ♖xc5 ♗g4! 18 ♘c3 ♘d4 19 ♗c4 ♘xf3 20 ♔c2 ♗f5+ 21 ♔b3 ♘d2+ 22 ♔a2 ♗e6! 0-1

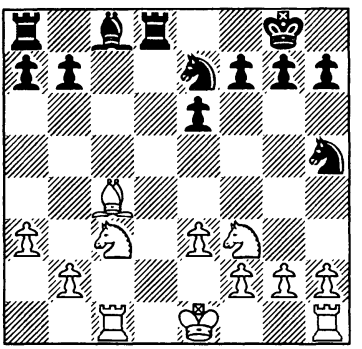
Game 107
Gelfand-Karpov
Polanica Zdroj 1998

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 d4 ♗e7 5 ♗f4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 a3 ♘c6 9 ♖c1 dxc4

The same simple treatment as after 9 ♗e2. The advance 9...d4 10 exd4 (10 ♘xd4 e5! 11 ♘b3 ♗xa3! 12 bxa3 exf4 13 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 14 exf4 ♗e6 15 f3 as in Kramnik-Beliavsky,

Belgrade 1993, and now 15...♖ac8 16 ♘c5 ♘a5! is equal according to Kramnik) 10...♘xd4 11 ♘e5!? (11 ♗d3!? is also interesting) 11...b6 12 ♗d3 ♗b7 13 0-0 h6 14 b4 ♗e7 15 ♘b5 ♘c6 (15...♘xb5 16 bxc5 ♘d5 17 ♗g3 ♗g5 18 ♖c4 a6 is unclear according to M.Gurevich) 16 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 17 ♘d6, as in M.Gurevich-Barsov, Antwerp 1998, and now 17...♗a4! 18 ♕xa4 ♗xd6 19 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 20 ♖fd1 ♕e5 is unclear according to Gurevich.

10 ♗xc4 ♘h5 11 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 12 ♗g5 ♗e7 13 ♗xe7 ♘xe7



14 g4 ♘f6 15 g5 ♘fd5 16 ♗xd5 ♘xd5 17 ♖d1 ♗d7 18 ♘xd5 exd5 19 ♘d4 ♖ac8 20 ♔d2 ♔f8 21 ♖c1 ♔e7 22 ♖hg1 ♖xc1 23 ♖xc1 ♔d6 24 ♖g1 g6 25 h4 ½-½

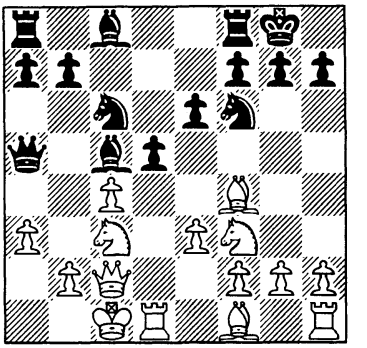
White has the better minor piece, but Black has all his weaknesses covered. White does have a small edge though.

We now turn our attention to the aggressive main line.

Game 108
Kramnik-Karpov
Amber (blindfold) 1998

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 d4 ♗e7 5 ♗f4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 a3 ♘c6 9 ♕c2 ♕a5 10 0-0-0!

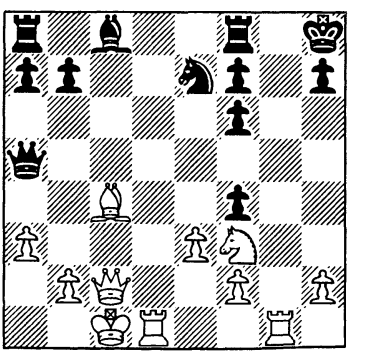
This has almost completely superseded the old move 10 ♖d1. One recent example is Alterman-Kasparov, simultaneous(!), Tel Aviv 1998, where 10...♗e7 11 ♘d2 e5 12 ♗g5 d4 13 ♘b3 ♕d8 14 ♗e2 a5 15 ♘a4 g6 16 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 17 c5 ♗e6 18 e4 ♕e8! 19 ♘b6 a4 20 ♘d2 ♖a5 was fine for Black.



10...♗e7 11 g4!

Another one of those wing thrusts! Black's best here is to enter a long, forcing line. The slower 11 h4 and ♔b1 are considered in Games 109 and 110 respectively, while 11 ♘d2 ♕b6! 12 ♘b3 (or 12 ♗d3 d4 13 ♘a4 ♕a5 with unclear chances) 12...♘a5 13 ♘xa5 ♕xa5 14 e4 dxe4 15 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 16 ♕xe4 ♗xa3 17 bxa3 ♕c3+ 18 ♕c2 ♕a1+ 19 ♕b1 ♕c3+ 20 ♕c2 was a draw in Gabriel-Lutz, Bad Homburg 1997.

11...dxc4 12 ♗xc4 e5! 13 g5 exf4 14 gxf6 ♗xf6 15 ♘d5 ♘e7 16 ♘xf6+ gxf6 17 ♖hg1+ ♔h8



18 e4

The latest attempt, trying to cut off the black queen from the defence of the kingside with ♗c4-d5. Two other moves have also been tried:

a) 18 ♕e4 ♘g6 19 ♕d4 ♕b6! 20 ♕xb6 axb6 21 ♖d6 ♗h3 22 ♗d5 fxe3 23 fxe3 ♖ac8 24 ♔b1 ♖cd8 25 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 26 ♗xf7 ♗f5 27 ♔a2 ♗e4 28 ♘d4 ♘e5 was complicated but balanced in Beliavsky-Yusupov, Dortmund 1998.

b) 18 ♘d4 fxe3 19 fxe3 ♗xf5 20 ♘xf5 ♕xf5 21 ♗d3 e5 22 ♔b1 f5 gave White some compensation for the pawn in Akopian-Pigusov, Tilburg 1994.

18...b5 19 ♗d5 ♘xd5 20 exd5 ♗d7!

An improvement over the very murky 20...b4 21 axb4 ♕a1+ 22 ♔d2 ♕a6 23 ♘d4 (23 ♕c6 ♖d8 24 ♔c3 ♗b7 25 ♕xa6 ♗xa6 26 ♖d4 was equal in Van Wely-Short, Wijk aan Zee 1997) 23...♖d8 24 b5 ♕b6 25 ♕e4 ♗b7 26 ♕xf4 ♖xd5 27 ♔c1, as in Akopian-Short, Groningen 1996.

21 ♔b1 b4! 22 ♖d4 ♖g8

This is very safe for Black, but in the post-mortem Karpov suggested the amazing 22...bxa3 23 ♖xf4 f5!? (23...axb2 24 ♕xh7+!! ♔xh7 25 ♖h4 is mate - watch out for this one!). Analysing the position with John Nunn during the tournament, we came to the conclusion that Black is better! White has two possibilities:

a) 24 ♘e5 ♖ab8 25 ♕d3 ♖xb2+ 26 ♔a1 which looks tricky for Black, but 26...♖d2!! 27 ♕e3 (27 ♕g3 ♖a2+ 28 ♔xa2 ♕d2+ 29 ♔xa3 ♕a5+ 30 ♔b2 ♖b8+ gives Black a raging attack) 27...♖xd5!! and the rook has tidied up the whole mess! Now 28 ♖h4, intending ♖h4xh7+, is met by 28...♕b6! and Black has a lot of pawns!

b) 24 ♘g5 and now only 24...f6!! (24...♖ab8 25 ♕d3 ♖xb2+ 26 ♔a1 is awful for Black) 25 ♘xh7 axb2!! 26 ♕xb2 ♖fb8! wins for Black. That doesn't seem fair!

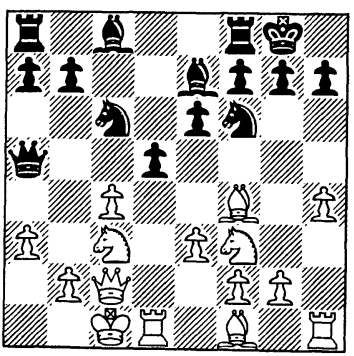
23 ♖xg8+ ♖xg8 24 ♕d2 ♗f5+ 25 ♔a2 ♖d8?

Instead 25...♖b8! 26 ♖xf4 (26 ♖xb4 ♖xb4 27 ♕xb4 ♕xd5+ 28 ♔a1 [28 ♕b3 ♗b1+] 28...♕d1+ [28...♕xf3 29 ♕f8 is mate] 29 ♔a2 ♗b1+ 30 ♔a1 ♗c2+ 31 ♔a2 ♕b1 is mate; 26 ♕xf4 b3+ 27 ♔a1 ♕xa3+!! 28 bxa3 b2+ 29 ♔a2 b1♕ is mate) 26...b3+ 27 ♔a1 ♕xd2 28 ♘xd2 ♗c2 29 ♖f3 ♖b5 30 ♖e3 ♖xd5 31 ♘xb3 ♖d1+ 32 ♔a2 ♗b1+ 33 ♔a1 ♗c2+ 34 ♔a2 ♗b1 with a draw is probably better. The game now swings back and forth and eventually ends in perpetual check.

26 ♕xb4 ♕xb4 27 axb4 ♖xd5 28 ♖xd5 ♗e6 29 ♔a3 ♗xd5 30 ♘d4 ♔g7 31 b5 ♔g6 32 ♘c6 ♔g5 33 ♘xa7 ♗a8 34 b6 ♔g4 35 ♘b5 ♔f3 36 ♘d6 ♔xf2 37 b7 ♗xb7 38 ♘xb7 ♔e3 39 ♘d6 f3 40 ♘f5+ ♔d3 41 ♘g3 f2 42 b4 f5 43 h4!! f4 44 ♘f1 ♔e2 45 ♘h2! f1♕ 46 ♘xf1 ♔xf1 47 b5 f3 48 b6 f2 49 b7 ♔g2 50 b8♕ f1♕ 51 ♕g8+ ♔h3 52 ♕xh7 f5 53 h5 ♕d3+ 54 ♔b2 ♕d2+ 55 ♔b3 ♕d3+ 56 ♔b2 ♕d2+ ½-½

Game 109
Gelfand-Karpov
Wijk aan Zee 1998

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 d4 ♗e7 5 ♗f4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 a3 ♘c6 9 ♕c2 ♕a5 10 0-0-0 ♗e7 11 h4!?



The latest idea. White supports a later ♘f3-g5 without taking on the weaknesses of 11 g4, which allow Black an immediate

resolution of the position.

11...a6 12 ♘g5

A couple of other moves have also been tried here:

a) Van Wely-Sharif, Linares Zonal 1995, was not a success for White after 12 cxd5? exd5 13 ♘g5 ♖d8 14 ♔b1 h6 15 ♘f3 ♗g4 16 ♗e2 ♖ac8 with a slight edge to Black.

b) 12 ♔b1 as in Chernin-Chernuschevich, Osterskar 1995, also gave White nothing after 12...dxc4 13 ♘g5 ♕f5 14 ♕xf5 exf5 15 ♗xc4 h6 16 ♘f3 ♗e6 17 ♗a2 ♖fd8.

12...♖d8 13 cxd5

13 ♗d3 h6 14 g4!?, intending ♗d3-h7+ followed by ♘g5xf7 and ♕c2-g6+, is an interesting idea of Crouch's. His analysis continues 14...e5 15 ♗h7+ ♔f8 16 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 17 ♕g6+ ♔f8 18 ♗xh6 gxh6 19 ♕xh6+ ♔f7 20 ♘xd5 ♘xh7 21 ♕xh7+ ♔e8 22 ♕g8+ ♔d7 23 ♕f7! with a winning attack for White. I feel that 14...d4 is the way for Black to play here; for example, 15 ♗h7+ ♔f8 16 ♘ce4 hxg5 17 hxg5 ♘xe4 18 ♗xe4 ♗d6 when White's compensation is not completely clear.

13...exd5 14 e4 ♘xe4! 15 ♘gxe4

15 ♘cxe4 (15 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 16 ♕xe4 ♖xg5!) 15...dxe4 16 ♖xd8+ ♘xd8 17 ♕e4 ♕f5! is some more interesting Crouch analysis.

15...dxe4 16 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 17 ♕xe4 g6 18 ♗c4 ♗f5 19 ♕e3 ♕d4!

Black is quite comfortable here.

20 ♕xd4 ♘xd4 21 ♖d1 ♘e6 22 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 23 g3 ♖c8 24 ♔b1 f6 25 ♘d5 ♗d8 26 ♗e3 ♗g4 27 ♖d2 ♗f5+ 28 ♔a2 ♖c2 29 ♖d1 ♔f7 30 ♘c3 ♗a5 31 ♔b3 ♗xc3 32 bxc3 ♖e2 33 ♖d6 g5 34 hxg5 ♗e6+ 35 c4 fxg5 36 ♖b6 ♗c8 37 a4 ♔g7 38 c5 h5 39 c6 bxc6 40 ♖xc6 ♗f5 41 ♗xg5 ♖xf2 42 ♔b4 ½-½

Game 110
Van Wely-Karpov
Amber (blindfold) 1998

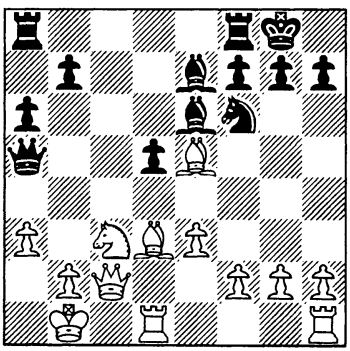
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 d5 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗f4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 a3 ♘c6 9 ♕c2 ♕a5 10 0-0-0 ♗e7 11 ♔b1 a6

Again this is the most natural response for Black. The disastrous 11...♖d8 12 ♘d2 ♕b6?? 13 c5! ♕xc5 14 ♘b3! trapping the queen was an unsuccessful try of Karpov's earlier in the same tournament.

12 ♘d2 ♕b6!

Black takes the opportunity to relocate the queen whilst simultaneously threatening ...♗e7xa3.

13 ♘b3 ♘a5! 14 ♘xa5 ♕xa5 15 cxd5 exd5 16 ♗e5 ♗e6 17 ♗d3



17...♘e4!

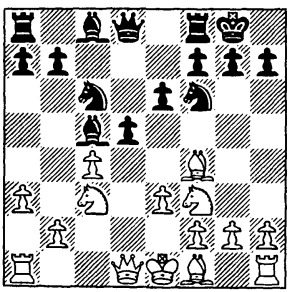
A very important resource for Black. 17...♖ac8 18 ♕d2 d4!? 19 ♗xd4 ♖fd8 20 ♖c1 g6 21 ♖hd1 (21 h4!? and 21 f3 are suggested by Van Wely) 21...♘e8 22 f3 ♘d6 23 e4 (Van Wely recommends 23 ♕f2 as stronger) 23...♘c4 24 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 25 ♕f2 ♖dxd4 26 ♖xd4 ♗c5 27 ♘e2 and now 27...♗xd4 28 ♘xd4 ♖xc1+ 29 ♔xc1 ♕c7+ would have equalised according to Van Wely. All the same, it seems that Black is slightly struggling to prove full compensation for the pawn.

18 f3 ♖fc8 19 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 20 fxe4 dxe4 21 ♗xe4 ♗f6 22 ♖d4 ♗xd4 23 exd4 f5 24 ♗f3 ♕b6 25 ♕d2 ♗f7 26 d5 ♖d8 27 ♖d1 ♕h6 28 ♕d4+ ♕f6 29 ♕f4 ♖ac8 30 ♖d4 b5 31 h4 h6 32 h5 ♕g5 33 ♕e5+ ♕f6 34 ♕f4 ♕g5 35 ♕e5+ ♕f6 ½-½

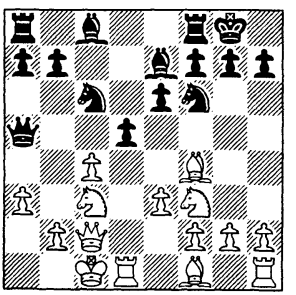
Summary
At present Black seems to be coping well in the main lines, but Crouch's 5...dxc4 is well worth attention also.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗f4 0-0

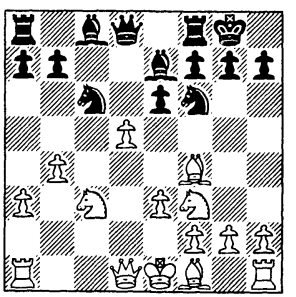
6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 a3 ♘c6 *(D)* **9 b4**
9 ♗e2 – *Game 103*
9 ♖c1
9...a6 – *Game 106*
9...dxc4 – *Game 107*
9 ♕c2 ♕a5 10 0-0-0 ♗e7 *(D)*
11 g4 – *Game 108*
11 h4 – *Game 109*
11 ♔b1 – *Game 110*
9...♗e7 10 cxd5 *(D)* **♘xd5**
10...exd5 – *Game 105*
11 ♘xd5 – *Game 104*



8...♘c6

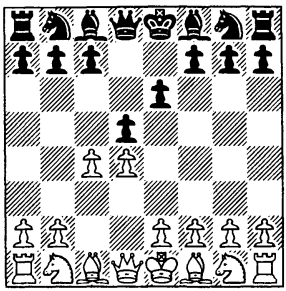


10...♗e7



10 cxd5

CHAPTER ELEVEN



Queen's Gambit Declined: 'General Knowledge'

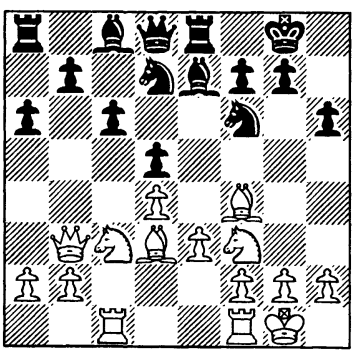
This last chapter brings together an assortment of tactical tricks, thoughts and lines – the kind of general knowledge you usually accumulate through practical experience.

The Oldest Trap of Them All!

Never do this as Black...!

Game 111
Euwe-Rubinstein
Bad Kissingen 1928

1 ♘f3 d5 2 c4 e6 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♗g5 ♘bd7 5 e3 ♗e7 6 ♘c3 0-0 7 ♖c1 c6 8 ♗d3 a6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 0-0 ♖e8 11 ♕b3 h6 12 ♗f4



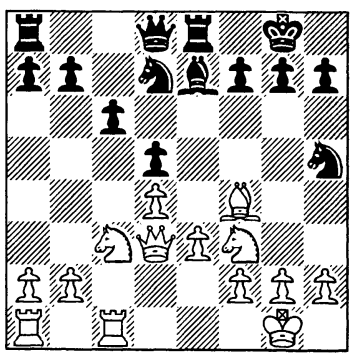
12...♘h5?? 13 ♘xd5!

White wins a pawn as 13...cxd5 14 ♗c7 traps the queen.

But you can do... this!

Game 112
I.Zaitsev-Sveshnikov
Moscow 1989

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗g5 ♗e7 7 e3 ♗f5 8 ♗d3 ♗xd3 9 ♕xd3 ♘bd7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖fc1 ♖e8 12 ♗f4 ♘h5



13 ♘xd5!?

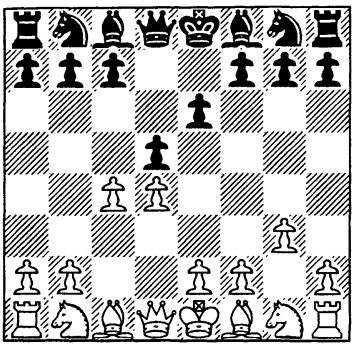
Forcing a draw.

13...cxd5 14 ♗c7 ♕c8 15 ♗a5

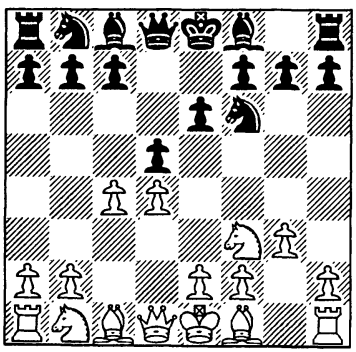
Black's queen cannot escape, but White

cannot profit from it.
15...♕b8 16 ♗c7 ♕c8 ½-½

What else do I need to know as Black?
If you wish to play the QGD, all you will need apart from the lines given in this book is a line against the Catalan – 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 g3



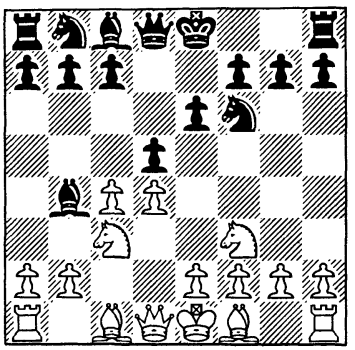
or 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 g3



which I'm afraid lies too far outside the scope of this book – to complete your repertoire against 1 d4. In general I would recommend the sound main lines after 4...♗e7 5 ♗g2 0-0 6 0-0 dxc4 7 ♕c2 a6.

What else do I need to know as White?
After 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3, apart from the 4...♗e7 systems to which this book has been devoted, Black has a variety of 'secondary systems' to which we devote this lightning tour: 4...♗b4, 4...♘bd7, 4...c5 and 4...dxc4.

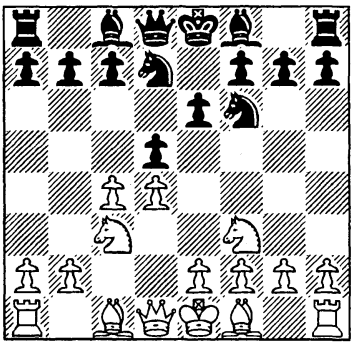
a) 4...♗b4



Black fights for the e4-square in more active fashion. This form of development owes something to the Nimzo-Indian Defence – in fact, 5 e3 transposes to a Rubinstein Nimzo-Indian.

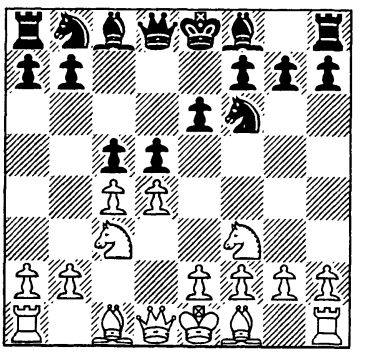
White's latest hot weapon against this line is 5 ♕a4+ ♘c6 (by forcing the knight to c6, White makes it much harder for his opponent to achieve his ...c7-c5 break) 6 a3 ♗xc3+ (6...♗e7 7 cxd5 exd5 8 ♗f4 0-0 9 e3 ♗f5 10 ♗a6! bxa6 11 ♕xc6 ♖b8 12 b4 was clearly better for White in Kramnik-Bareev, European Club Cup 1997) 7 bxc3 ♘e4 (7...♗d7 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♗g5 h6 [9...♘e5 10 ♕b4 ♘xf3+ 11 gxf3 b6 12 ♖g1 was unpleasant for Black in Malakhatko-Moiseyenko, Ukrainian Championship 1998] 10 ♗h4 g5 11 ♗g3 is slightly better for White according to Malakhatko) 8 ♕c2 0-0 (8...♘a5 9 e3 b6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♗d3 ♗f5 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♘e1 ♗g6 14 f3 ♘d6 15 ♗xg6 hxg6 16 e4 was nice for White in Maric-Matveeva, Belgrade 1998) 9 e3 b6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♗d3 ♗f5 12 c4 ♖e8 13 cxd5 ♕xd5 14 0-0 ♘d6 15 ♗xf5 ♘xf5, as in Dautov-Dizdar, Dresden Zonal 1998, and now 16 ♗b2, intending ♖f1-e1, ♘f3-d2 and e3-e4, was slightly better for White according to Dautov.

b) 4...♘bd7



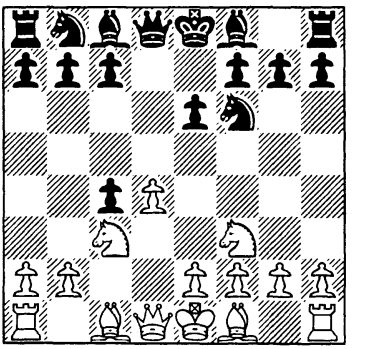
This move flexibly retains the option of ...♗f8-b4 or ...♗f8-e7. White's simplest reply is 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗f4! so that after 6...c6 7 e3 ♗e7 8 h3 0-0 9 ♗d3 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♘f8 11 ♕c2 a position from the Exchange variation is reached where White has put his bishop directly on f4, as in Sadler-Lputian, Elista Olympiad 1998, rather than lose a move with ♗c1-g5 first and only later ♗g5-f4.

c) 4...c5



This equalising attempt is currently under a cloud as a result of Kramnik-Van Wely, Amber (blindfold) 1998, when 5 cxd5 ♘xd5 (5...cxd4 6 ♕xd4 ♘xd5 7 e4 comes to the same thing) 6 e4 cxd4 7 ♕xd4 ♘xc3 8 ♕xc3 ♘c6 9 a3! ♗d7 10 ♗e2 ♖c8 11 0-0 ♘a5 12 ♕d3! ♗a4 13 ♕xd8+ ♖xd8 14 ♗e3 ♘b3 15 ♗d1! a6 (15...b5 16 ♗xb3 ♗xb3 17 ♖fc1 was awful for Black in Anand-Korchnoi, Tilburg 1998) 16 ♗xb3 ♗xb3 17 ♖ac1 ♗d6 18 ♗b6 ♖a8 19 ♘d4 ♗a4 20 ♖c4 ♗d7 21 ♖d1 gave White huge pressure.

d) 4...dxc4



The sharp Vienna system. White should continue 5 e4 (5 e3 a6! 6 ♗xc4 b5 7 ♗d3 ♗b7 leads to an unchallenging QGA for Black as White's knight has been placed on c3 too early) 5...♗b4 6 ♗g5 c5 7 ♗xc4 cxd4 8 ♘xd4, when 8...♕a5 (Black players recently seem to have gone off the sharp 8...♗xc3+ 9 bxc3 ♕a5, since 10 ♗b5+ ♘bd7 [10...♗d7 11 ♗xf6 gxf6 12 ♕b3 a6 13 ♗e2 ♘c6 14 0-0 ♕c7 15 ♕a3 ♖c8 16 ♖ad1 ♘a5 17 ♕c1 ♔e7 18 ♕h6 ♗c6 19 ♘xe6!!, intending 19...♔xe6 20 e5!, was crushing for White in Piket-Topalov, World Championship 1997] 11 ♗xf6 ♕xc3+ 12 ♔f1 gxf6 13 h4 ♕a5 14 ♖c1 ♔e7 16 ♕c2 a6 17 ♗e2 ♘e5 18 ♕b2 ♖d6 19 ♖b3 ♘d7 20 f4 ♘c5 21 ♖e3 ♖b6 22 ♕c2 ♖b4 23 ♖c3 ♘a4 24 ♖xc8, as in Lputian-Gabriel, Armenia-Germany 1996, is an example of the dangers) 9 ♗d2 ♕c5 10 ♗b5+ ♗d7 11 ♘b3 ♕e7 12 ♗d3 ♘c6 13 0-0 0-0 14 a3 ♗d6 15 f4 e5 16 f5 ♘d4 17 ♗g5 ♗c6 18 ♘d2 b5 19 ♘d5 ♗xd5 20 exd5 followed by ♘d2-e4 was rather painful for Black in Nikolic-Lautier, Monaco (blindfold) 1998.

Question 1. And what if I play 1 d4 d5 2 c4

e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♗g5 rather than 4 ♘f3?

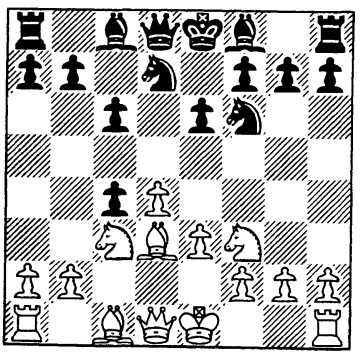
Answer 1. Then the only independent line really is 4...dxc4!? It's not stupid! After 5 e4!? (5 e3 is the most sensible) 5...♗e7 (5...c5!? 6 d5 ♗e7 7 ♗f4 ♘xe4!? 8 ♘xe4 exd5 9 ♘g3 0-0 10 ♘f3 ♗f6 11 ♕d2 was Neverov-Crouch, Hastings 1991/92, when 11...♕b6 would have given White problems with b2 according to Crouch) 6 ♘f3 c5 7 ♗xc4 cxd4 8 ♕xd4 h6 9 ♗f4 ♕a5 10 0-0 ♘c6 11 ♕d3 0-0 12 e5 ♘h5 13 ♕e4 ♘xf4 14 ♕xf4 ♕b4!? the game was very complicated in M.Gurevich-Kupreichik, Groningen 1997.

The Main Move ...♘f6-e4!!

Finally, I hope to have instilled in you a sense of *the* QGD move - the move that gets things going. Every opening has such a move:

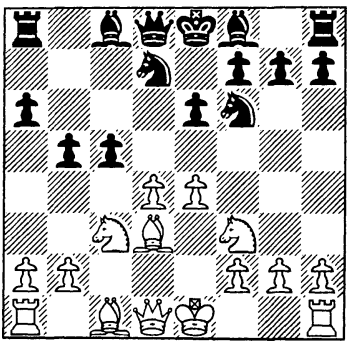
In The Semi-Slav, it is the surprising ...d5xc4!

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 e3 ♘bd7 6 ♗d3 dxc4!



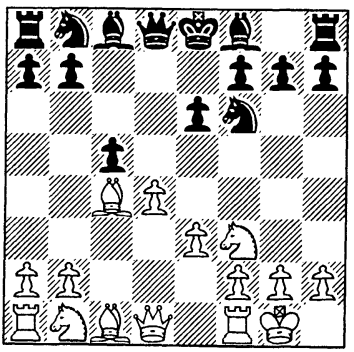
It feels odd to play this move after 'strong-pointing' the d5-pawn with the e6- and c6-pawns, but it removes all the obstacles to Black's queenside expansion, which proceeds apace after 7 ♗xc4 b5 8 ♗d3 a6 9 e4 c5.

see following diagram

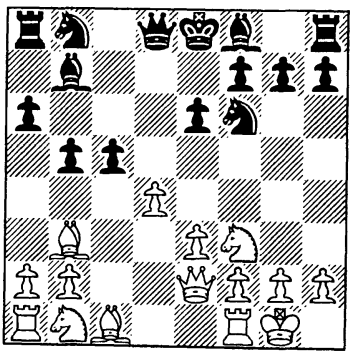


In the QGA, it is ...a7-a6!

After 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0



Black can only develop his pieces actively by 6...a6! 7 ♕e2 b5 8 ♗b3 ♗b7.



...and in the QGD, as we have seen so often, it is that ...♘f6-e4 move!

INDEX OF COMPLETE GAMES

Akopian-Short, *European Team Ch, Pula 1997* 59
Akopian-Short, *Linares 1995* 86
Alekhine-Capablanca, *Buenos Aires (2nd matchgame) 1927* 37
Alterman-Pigusov, *Beijing 1997* 79
Anastasian-Lputian, *Yerevan 1996* 127
Andersson-Kasparov, *Belgrade (match) 1985* 129
Arencibia-Beliavsky, *Elista Olympiad 1998* 97
Arkell-Short, *British Ch., Torquay 1998* 83
Azmaiparashvili-Short, *Manila Olympiad 1992* 72
Bacrot-Korchnoi, *Albert (match) 1997* 150
Beim-Korneev, *Frankfurt 1997* 111
Beliavsky-Ivanchuk, *Linares 1993* 128
Bobotsov-Petrosian.T, *Lugano Olympiad 1968* 130
Cifuentes Parada-Korneev, *Malaga 1998* 19
Cramling.P-Amura, *Merlo (match) 1994* 149
Cramling.P-Campora, *Spanish Team Ch. 1993* 54
Dautov-Georgiev.Kir, *Elista Olympiad 1998* 84
Dreev-Short, *Linares 1995* 165
Dydyshko-Kveinys, *Moscow Olympiad 1994* 119
Ehlvest-Lputian, *Yerevan 1996* 159
Eingorn-Balashov, *Riga 1985* 43
Epishin-Ziatdinov, *World Open, Philadelphia 1997* 41
Euwe-Rubinstein, *Bad Kissingen 1928* 170
Fischer-Spassky, *World Championship 1972* 65
Gabriel-Bönsch, *Bad Homburg 1996* 152
Gabriel-Lputian, *Germany-Armenia match 1996* 154
Garcia Ilundain-Ubilava, *Ampuriabrava 1997* 57
Gelfand-Ivanchuk, *Linares 1993* 128

Gelfand-Karpov, *Polanica Zdroj 1998* 165
Gelfand-Karpov, *Wijk aan Zee 1998* 167
Gelfand-Kramnik, *Dortmund 1997* 157
Gelfand-Piket, *Wijk aan Zee 1998* 140
Gligoric-Vaganian, *Zonal 1998* 157
Gulko-Short, *match 1994* 134
Hulak-Lutz, *Wijk aan Zee 1995* 81
Ilinsky-Nenashev, *Bishkek Zonal 1993* 60
Izeta-Asrian, *Ubeda 1998* 81
Karpov-Campora, *San Nicolas (match) 1994* 122
Karpov-Campora, *Villarrobledo (rapidplay) 1997* 29
Karpov-Georgiev.Kir, *Tilburg 1994* 83
Karpov-Kharitonov, *USSR Championship 1988* 129
Karpov-Short, *Amsterdam 1991* 83
Karpov-Yusupov, *Dortmund 1997* 11
Karpov-Yusupov, *London (6th matchgame) 1989* 23
Karpov-Yusupov, *London (8th matchgame) 1989* 17
Kasparov-Ivanchuk, *Wijk aan Zee 1999* 137
Kasparov-Portisch, *Brussels 1986* 58
Khalifman-Chandler, *German Bundesliga 1995* 75
Korchnoi-Hübner, *Biel 1986* 32
Korchnoi-Short, *Wijk aan Zee 1990* 68
Kramnik-Karpov, *Amber (blindfold) 1998* 166
Kramnik-Lutz, *Germany 1994* 22
Kramnik-Short, *Dortmund 1995* 158
Kramnik-Yusupov, *Dortmund 1998* 101
Krasenkov-Beliavsky, *Yerevan Olympiad 1996* 112
Krasenkov-Karpov, *Polanica Zdroj 1998* 164
Krasenkov-Yusupov, *Pula 1997* 127
Krivoseja-Klovan, *Germany 1998* 126
Lputian-Cifuentes Parada, *Ubeda 1996* 60
Lutz-Yusupov, *Tilburg 1993* 141
Milov-Pigusov, *New York Open 1998* 136
Miralles-Spassky, *Angers 1990* 92
Nenashev-Vaganian, *USSR Championship 1991* 104
Nikolic.P-Hansen.L, *Wijk aan Zee 1995* 122
Nikolic.P-Kramnik, *Amber (blindfold) 1998* 130
Nikolic.P-Lputian, *Yerevan Olympiad 1996* 24
Nikolic.P-Yusupov, *Horgen 1994* 21
Orsag-Bellini, *Montecatini 1997* 56
Petrosian.T-Beliavsky, *USSR Championship 1983* 132
Pinter-Portisch, *Austria 1997* 86

Pinter-Prandstetter, *Taxco Interzonal 1985* 34
Pirc-Tylor, *Hastings 1932/33* 37
Portisch-Dizdar, *Sarajevo 1986* 25
Portisch-Vaganian, *St John, Candidates match 1988* 105
Rivas Pastor-Toth, *Rome 1984* 36
Romanishin-Ehlvest, *Biel SKA 1996* 43
Ruban-Panchenko, *Elista 1994* 120
Rubinstein-Takacs, *Budapest 1926* 131
Sadler-Short, *British Ch. playoff, Torquay 1998* 26
Sadler-Van der Sterren, *Linares Zonal 1995* 155
Sakaev-Beliavsky, *European Club Cup 1999* 162
Salov-Piket, *Madrid 1997* 50
Sherbakov-Koniushkov, *Krasnodar 1997* 145
Sokolov.I-Dautov, *Nussloch 1996* 136
Sokolov.I-Oll, *Pula 1997* 123
Sokolov.I-Van der Sterren, *Dutch Ch., Rotterdam 1998* 151
Spangenberg-San Segundo, *Buenos Aires 1995* 47
Thorsteins-Zaitsev.I, *Protvino 1988* 143
Timman-Kasparov, *Prague (match) 1998* 77
Topalov-Kasparov, *Linares 1997* 144
Topalov-Kasparov, *Sofia (rapidplay match) 1998* 73
Topalov-Kasparov, *Sofia (rapidplay match) 1998* 106
Topalov-Kramnik, *Linares 1998* 78
Topalov-Piket, *Amber (blindfold) 1998* 142
Topalov-Yermolinsky, *Yerevan Olympiad 1996* 30
Topalov-Yusupov, *Elista Olympiad 1998* 164
Vaisser-Bricard, *French Team Championship 1998* 141
Vaisser-San Segundo, *Greece 1997* 142
Van der Sterren-Hansen.L, *Wijk aan Zee 1995* 113
Van Wely-Karpov, *Amber (blindfold) 1998* 168
Van Wely-Vaganian, *Yerevan Olympiad 1996* 156
Vyzmanavin-Gavrilov, *Novgorod 1995* 103
Vyzmanavin-Zarubin, *Russian Team Ch. 1995* 91
Ward-Parker, *4NCL 1997* 139
Winants-Kasparov, *Brussels 1987* 67
Yermolinsky-Beliavsky, *Groningen 1993* 93
Yurtaev-Beliavsky, *Yerevan Olympiad 1996* 90
Yusupov-Kramnik, *Vienna 1996* 124
Yusupov-Lputian, *Germany-Armenia match 1996* 145
Zaitsev.I-Sveshnikov, *Moscow 1989* 170
Zviaginsev-Kharitonov, *Russia 1995* 44
Zviaginsev-Kharitonov, *Russian Team Ch, Kazan 1995* 45

queen's gambit declined

In this book Grandmaster Sadler explains the ideas behind the Queen's Gambit Declined, one of Black's most dependable replies to the queen's pawn. He discusses all of the major variations in popular practice, explaining the key plans and ideas and highlighting important recent developments.

- Written by Grandmaster Matthew Sadler, one of the world's top young players
- Full explanation of both the latest theory and important thematic ideas
- Covers the ever-popular Queen's Gambit Declined

Since winning the British Championship in 1995, **Matthew Sadler** has established himself as one of the world's leading young grandmasters. His performances at the Olympiad in 1996 and European Championships in 1997 were major factors in the success of the English team at those events. This book completes a trilogy of Queen's Gambit books by Grandmaster Sadler which includes *The Slav* and *The Semi-Slav*, both of which are also available from Everyman Chess.

EVERYMAN CHESS
www.everyman.uk.com
Published in the UK by
Everyman Publishers plc
Distributed in the US by
The Globe Pequot Press

£14.99
$19.95

ISBN 1-85744-256-3